

**STATUS OF WOMEN IN MONGOLIA'S TRANSITIONAL
SOCIETY, 1991-2000**

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JYOTI PANDEY



**CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES DIVISION
CENTRE FOR SOUTH, CENTRAL, SOUTH-EAST ASIAN
& SOUTH- WEST PACIFIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067
2012**



CENTRE FOR SOUTH, CENTRAL, SOUTHEAST ASIAN & SOUTH WEST PACIFIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110 067

Phone : 2670 4350
Fax : 91-11-2674 1586
91-11-2674 2592

Date: 11.07.2012

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “Status of Women in Mongolia’s Transitional Society, 1991-2000” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

JYQTI PANDEY

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

समापति / Chairperson
दक्षिण, मध्य, दक्षिण पूर्व एशियाई एवं दक्षिण
पश्चिम प्रशांत अध्ययन केन्द्र
Centre for South, Central, Southeast
Asian and South West Pacific Studies
अंतराष्ट्रीय अध्ययन संस्थान
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली / New Delhi - 110067
(Chairperson)



Sharad K. Soni
Dr. Sharad K. Soni
Centre for South, Central, South East Asian
and South West Pacific Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067
Ph.: (O) 26704350, (R) 26188817
(Supervisor)

“There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing.”

- Swami Vivekananda

DEDICATED

To my lovely parents

Thank you for your love and encouragement in my entire life.

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PREFACE

The last decade of the twentieth century, soon after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, saw Mongolia going for transition from communism and centrally-planned economy to democracy and market economy that also paved the way for the whole society to transform itself from a semi-nomadic pastoral society to one based on settled industries in an urbanized environment. Such transformation brought out many changes in Mongolia's polity, economy and society which also had tremendous influence on the prevailing status of women or in other words, there had been sharp changes in the status of women in the overall transitional society. As such Mongolia is now considered to be a relatively gender-equal society, in which men and women have similar access to social services, apart from having basic human rights. Mongolian women, in comparison to men, enjoy similar levels of health, higher life expectancy, higher levels of education and lower but relatively high levels of participation in the labour force. Mongolia has been ranked as 95th in the UNDP Gender-related Development Index (GDI), falling into the lower level of the "medium" country classification in terms of gender disparities in human development. According to 2010 Census, women account for almost 50 per cent of the total population of 2.7 million, with 43.5 per cent of female population being under 15 years of age. In addition, women comprise 45.5 per cent of the economically active population, with 83 per cent working in the formal sector. Although the female literacy rate is 97.5 per cent, their political, social and economic rights are much lower in practice than the men despite the country being a gender-equal society.

The background story of the status of women reveals that before 1921, Mongolia was a feudal society where women had limited rights. However, the victory of the 1921 People's revolution paved the way for genuine emancipation of women. The profound socio-economic transformations in the post-1921 period fully dovetailed with the interests of the entire people, including the women. These changes made the women to realize that they are equal partners with men and have a place of importance in the social life of the country. Since then the protection of women's rights ultimately became a concern of the state. Between 1921 and 1940 women gained their basic political and social rights. The formal denouncement of exploitation of women by men, separation of

Buddhist church from the state and anti-illiteracy campaign played a decisive role in the social and spiritual emancipation of women. The first constitution of Mongolia, promulgated in 1924, provided the women for the first time in the history of the country, political and civil rights including right to vote and right to work.

During the socialist stage of country's development (1940-1960), when the transition from feudalism to socialism was completed, women's cause was further strengthened. The collectivization of livestock too had tremendous political and social influence on women's emancipation. Rural women, for the first time in the country's history, began to be treated as individual citizens and were drawn into other kinds of social activities as well. By the time the Soviet political and economic support to Mongolia came to an end in 1989-90, the gender gap began to be witnessed at all levels. However, in the transitional decade of 1991-2000, several measures had been taken to enhance the status of women, and once again with the exception of a few employment sectors, women were found to be key figures across the workforce. This portrait of women depicts an aspect of modern Mongolian society where women are involved in various professional roles in different sectors.

The new Constitution of Mongolia which was adopted in 1992 set down the basic rights and freedom of citizens, including the right to live in a healthy and safe environment, to have social benefits during pregnancy, child care, old age, loss of working ability and to have access to and protection from medical care and other health services according to legal regulations. The Constitution also assures equal rights for men and women in all spheres. Besides, Mongolia has endorsed various agreements at major international conferences that include the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. Some of the conference commitments that have special relevance to the transition period in relation to women's economic and social advancement include commitment to providing secure and sustainable livelihoods; minimizing the negative effects of economic reform programmes; eradicating poverty; ensuring women's equal access to land and other property; measuring and valuing unpaid work; and guaranteeing corporate responsibility. Further, on 27 September 1999, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed

between the Government of Mongolia and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for cooperation in the implementation of the National Programme for the Advancement of Women (NPAW) covering the period from 1996 to 2000.

During the transition period of 1991-2000, the overall situation of Mongolian women so far as their social, economic and political status is concerned can be described in both the positive as well as negative terms. To begin with, education is often seen as an important tool in raising the social status of women beyond the traditional attributes which ascribe status to women, such as bearing numerous children. Encouragement to women education during the period of this study shows viable results which is evident by the fact that in 2000, there were 84,797 students studying in higher educational institutions and colleges, of which 53,690 or 63.2 per cent were women. Such a scenario gave way to many other social trends, including falling fertility and family size, the rapid rise in female-headed households, which constituted 10 per cent of all households in 1998, a 24 per cent increase since 1995 and the largely youthful character of the migration towards the capital city of Ulaanbaatar on the one hand and the *ger* settlements in rural areas, and away from small urban settlements in rural areas. But in economic and financial terms, the returns to women from education were low due to the fact that there had been much lower share of income for women in the occupational and decision-making hierarchy in formal employment. At least in two areas, i.e., information technology and mining, women were paid less than men for the same work. The relationship between achievements in education and pay, position and prospects for promotion and advancement in employment and business appeared to be shaky. Even the mandatory retirement age of 55 for women is five years lower than the men.

Mongolian women are traditionally well protected within the family context. Mongolia's Family Law provides for equal parental authority and spousal rights. But in practice, the responsibility of family and childcare falls almost exclusively on women. Legislation provides same legal rights for both women and men in the area of inheritance, such as access to land and access to property other than land. However, recent studies by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) show that government regulations did not proactively support gender equality in access to, or control over,

newly allocated land. This raised concerns that land allotment might follow the trend of initial phases of privatization in which 46 per cent of the properties (mostly rural livestock and urban housing) were allocated solely to male heads of households. Sexual harassment in the workplace, restrictions on women's economic rights, trafficking for prostitution and forced labour were new forms of gender based violence against women being experienced in Mongolia during the transitional decade of 1991-2000. Legislation provides a high level of protection for the physical integrity of women. Although rape and domestic abuse are illegal, no law specifically prohibited spousal rape, and rape remained a problem. An NHRC survey found that one of every two employed women under the age of 35 identified herself as a victim of workplace sexual harassments. As a result, in 1995, the National Centre against Violence (NCAV), an NGO, launched domestic violence prevention campaigns which were financially supported by the State and local governments in providing services to domestic violence victims.

So far as economic status is concerned, during 1991-2000 period unemployment and poverty were new phenomena in Mongolia that affected women more severely than men. It is to be noted that women, who constitute 51.3 per cent of the total population, played a central role in the Mongolian economy, accounting for 51 per cent of total workforce. The privatization of factories and other economic enterprises as well as an overall decline in production resulted in an increasing unemployment rate among women, since they have been the first workers to be laid off. The high share of women in industry disguises the fact that women's employment in manufacturing has declined in absolute terms and more sharply than men's. There has been a sharp reduction in state child-care provision, which constrains women's ability to enter and compete "freely" in markets. At the same time, women face discrimination in recruitment in private markets because of their child-bearing and child-care obligations.

There was a shift into the informal sector and into the domestic sector, much of which unaccounted for and unsupported. Women make up a majority of the self-employed in the informal sector. The transition largely depended on intensified and unsustainable use of women's labour which came into fore due to the growth of the livestock economy. Women's labour also intensified through caring for others, as health, education and child-care services had been reduced, particularly at the provincial level

and user fees had been introduced. Health indicators, in particular maternal mortality rates, deteriorated over the transition, from 131 per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 158 per 100,000 live births in 1998. The increase in women's time and energy workloads with the shrinking of the formal state sector employment and income, the expansion of the informal sector and domestic sector remained a cause for concern among women's groups and agencies concerned with human development issues. The privatization of herds and housing and state enterprises, the disposal of state assets through direct allocation of vouchers and auctions overwhelmingly benefited men, as heads of households. This had important consequences for women's ability to mobilize collateral in credit markets. Moreover, in the much larger informal sector, the notion of corporate responsibility did not exist.

As regards political status, the women share of political participation declined from 23 per cent in 1990 to 3 per cent in 1992 and then had risen to 10 per cent in 2000, but it was still a little over half that of 1990 and far from the international benchmark of 30 per cent. The decline was the result of cancelling the quota system set up in the Soviet period to ensure some representation by women. The low and declining share of parliamentary seats indicates the nature of the political machinery, the nature of recruitment and the entire selection process of candidates for political parties. It also highlights the issue of the financial, social and political resources a candidate needed. However, there was a link between the entry of women and the treatment of women's issues by the political parties, who relegated women's issues to the social sphere and in terms of a vulnerable group in need of protection. Today women's perceptions are that they were discriminated against as women, or that they had little legitimacy as leaders in the political sphere. These factors inhibited their choice to exercise their rights to become candidates and their capability to function as decision-makers. There has been no indicator that shows the gains for the women in their political status and the consolidation of their civil and political rights since transition began in 1991. Even it does not show women's initiatives in key issues and their dynamism in NGOs. The gains are seen in terms of the exercise of more freedom of choice and expression and the open spaces created by institutions such as the media. While the institutions for governance, the legislature, the judiciary, the executive as well the laws for upholding rights were put in

place and developed, the institutional mechanisms and the capacity for effective implementation lagged far behind.

It is in this context this dissertation seeks to analyse the status of women in Mongolia, particularly in terms of challenges they faced as the country underwent transition. It try to find out both the positive and negative impacts of the transformation in Mongolia's socio- economic and political structures over the first decade of transition on women's social, economic and political status. The scope of the study is limited to the period beginning from 1991, i.e., the year when the collapse of the former Soviet Union provided Mongolia an opportunity to go for the transition from communism and centrally planned economy to democracy and market-oriented economy. The cut off year has been chosen as 2000 because it was in this year that the Mongolian government's five-year "National Programme for the Advancement of Women" was culminated. The year 2000 was also the target year for the "Poverty Alleviation Programme" (PAP) which was launched in 1994 with an aim of reducing the number of people, both men and women, below the poverty line to 10 per cent. This is not to ignore the pre-1991 and post-2000 periods but only to suggest that the period chosen for this dissertation is critical to highlight the commensurate changes in gender relations and the level of social, economic and political status of women in Mongolia's transitional phase.

The broad objective of the study is to understand the socio- economic and political status of women in Mongolia. The following are the specific objectives of the research:

- To study the social, economic and political status of women in Mongolia's post-1991 democratic state structure.
- To examine the level of legal mechanism available to address the issues of Mongolian women.
- To highlight the impact of "modernization" on women in Mongolia.
- To analyse the causes of comparatively low participation of Mongolian women in decision making.
- To make a comparative study of both the urban as well as rural Mongolian women so far as their economic status is concerned.

This work has followed a historical, descriptive, analytical and empirical methodology while examining the pertinent questions with regard to the status of Mongolian women in social, economic and political arena. Both the available primary and secondary source materials will be consulted to fulfill the objectives of the study. Primary sources include government documents in the form of reports and speeches, action plans and plan implementation, constitutional documents consisting of civil and political rights given to women, statistical data as well as various ADB, World Bank and UN agencies' survey reports. The secondary sources include books, articles published in various journals, newspapers as well as internet sources.

This dissertation has been divided into five chapters including conclusion in order to discuss the thematic issues separately. The first chapter deals with an overview of women in Mongolia beginning with the historical background (pre-1921 period), situation of women in pre-transitional Mongolia (1921-1990), and at the launch of transition to democracy and market economy (1991). It also deals with the major issues affecting Mongolian women.

The second chapter highlights Mongolian women's social status in the light of demographic trends, focusing on education, health and the rise in gender-based violence during 1991-2000, besides detailing government initiatives in order to enhance women's social status including constitutional rights, initiatives of both the social organizations working for women emancipation and NGOs led by women activists.

Chapter three presents the impact of economic transition on Mongolian women, their contribution in economic activities in both the urban and rural areas during 1991-2000, government action plans and plan implementation initiatives for enhancing their economic status, various employment opportunities including self-employment in informal sector, besides discussing poverty alleviation programme relevant to women.

Chapter four discuss the political situation of Mongolian women in terms of their representation in political parties and the government as well as their role in decision-making and policy formulation, focusing particularly on the institutional mechanisms like National Programme for the Advancement of Women and its effective implementation. It also deals with various civil and political rights given to women, besides examining the

role of media in raising the voice of women in line with freedom of expression so far as political development of the country is concerned.

Chapter five pulls together the main issues and includes some recommendations for the empowerment of Mongolian women and the achievement of gender equality.

11 July 2012

Jyoti Pandey

ABBREVIATION MONGOLIA

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COC	Combined Oral Contraceptive
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
DPT	Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus
GCSD	Gender Center for Sustainable Development
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measurement
GHD	Global Human Development Report
GOM	Government of Mongolia
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IUD	Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Devices
IWRAW	International Women's Rights Action Watch
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LEOS	Liberal Women's Brain Pool
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHDR	Mongolian Human Development Report
MHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOH	Ministry of Health
MWA	Mongolian Women's Association
MWF	Mongol Women's Federation

MWLA	Mongolian Women Lawyers Association
NAC	National Authority for Children
NCAV	National Center Against Violence
NCC	National Council for Children
NCGE	National Council on Gender Equality
NCWNC	National CEDAW Watch Network Center
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NHDR	National Human Development Report
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NPAP	National Poverty Alleviation Program
NPAW	National Program for the Advancement of Women
NSO	National Statistical Office
RTI	Reproductive Track Infection
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMEs	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United National Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
WIRC	Women's Information and Research Center
WSPM	Women for Social Progress Movement

GLOSSARY OF MONGOLIAN TERMS

<i>Aimag</i>	Province
<i>Bag</i>	Provincial (rural) sub district
<i>Duureg</i>	Ulaanbaatar city district
<i>Dzud</i>	Freezing snow or ice covering pastures
<i>Ger</i>	Traditional Mongolia felt tent
<i>Hural or khural</i>	Legislative body
<i>Khoroo</i>	Ulaanbaatar city sub-district
<i>Soum</i>	Provincial (rural) district or county
<i>Tugrug (MNT)</i>	Currency unit; currently there are approximately 1070 tugrugs to \$1US

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

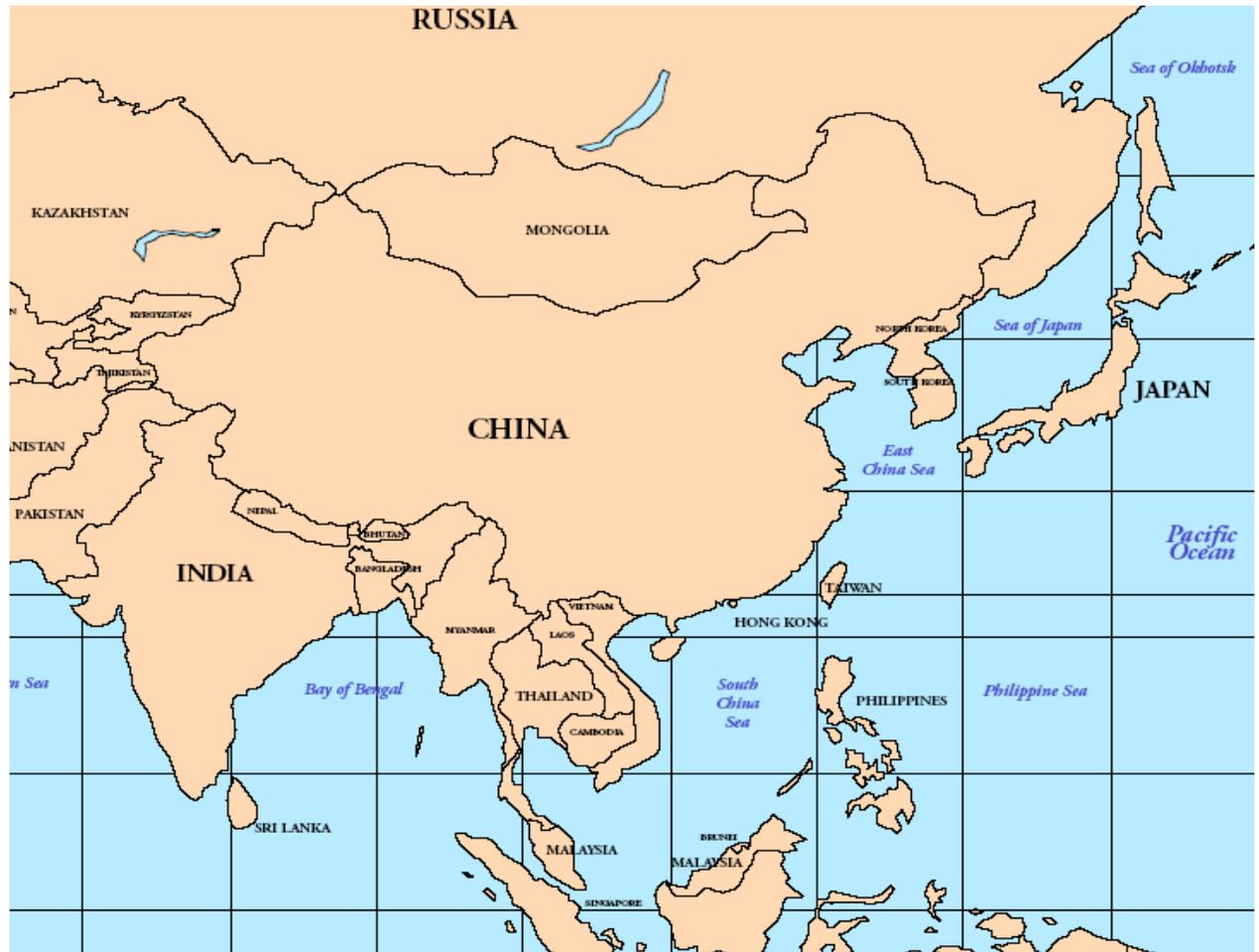
Mongolia is a land-locked country situated in the northern part of Central Asia bordering Siberian Russia to the north and China to the south, east and west (Map 1). The country has a vast but sparsely populated territory. It covers 1.5 million square kilometers¹, about one half the size of India and four times that of Japan. Mongolia has an extreme climate, with a wide range of temperatures. Droughts and unusually cold and snowy winters (-30° Celsius) have decimated livestock and destroyed the livelihoods of thousands of families. At the same time, due to its elevation and inland location, Mongolia averages 257 cloudless days each year and, therefore, it is known as the “Land of Blue Sky”. Administratively, Mongolia is divided into 22 major administrative units, including 22 *aimags* (provinces) and capital city of Ulaanbaatar. *Aimag* populations vary and range between 12,500 and 122,000 people, they also vary in size with the largest covering as much as 165.4 square kilometers of territory. An *aimag* is comprised of up to 27 *soums* (counties), including the *aimag* centre. *Soums* in turn are comprised of *baghs* (rural settlements). In Mongolia there are 342 *soums* and 1,681 *baghs*. Also, the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, is subdivided into 121 service districts called *khoroos*. *Bagh* residents mainly lead a nomadic life. They migrate with their herds depending on the change in season and weather conditions. There are three large cities: the capital city Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan and Erdenet, the latter two are located along the main rail route in the Central region. A third (32.5 per cent) of the population lives in Ulaanbaatar, and over half (54.7 per cent) live in urban settlements, with the rest in rural areas.

Mongolia is ranked to 117th place among 177 countries by Human Development Index. According to Census of 2000, adult literacy rate stands at 97.8 per cent, in which 98 per cent is male and 97.5 per cent is female. Such a high literacy rate in a small country like Mongolia points to the existence of a civilized society, where influence of nomadism and Buddhist culture is also visible. Today Mongolia is a well-structured society with a total population of 2.74 million, 54.7 per cent of whom live in urban areas

¹ National Statistical Office of Mongolia, (2001), *Mongolian Statistical Yearbook*, Ulaanbaatar.

with major concentrations in the three industrial cities of Darhan, Erdenet and the capital Ulaanbaatar.²

Map 1: Mongolia and its Neighbours.



Source: Alabama Maps URL: <http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/world/asia/easia2c.pdf>

While, in the past Mongolians were totally nomadic moving seasonally with their herds over the vast lands of the country, currently most of the rural population including women is involved in semi-nomadic animal husbandry along with wheat and vegetable production on state co-operatives and farms. Since the focus of this research study is on the overall situation of women in Mongolia, it needs to be set in a dynamic context of

² National Statistical office of Mongolia, (2002), Gender in Mongolia: Analysis Based on the 2000 Census, 2000 Population and Housing Census, Ulaanbaatar.

socio-economic and political transformations. As such, the following paragraphs highlight the situation of women in Mongolia in a historical perspective.

A unified Mongolia was forged in 1206 with the creation of the Mongol empire by Chinggis Khan. However, after the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty in 1368, the Mongols returned to their earlier pattern of constant internal conflict and occasional raids on the Chinese borderlands³. Although in the 16th and 17th centuries Mongolia firmly came under the influence of Tibetan Buddhism⁴, at the end of the 17th century, most of Mongolia had been incorporated into the area ruled by the Chinese Qing Dynasty. Following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911⁵ and the victory of the people's revolution in 1921⁶, Mongolia won independence, and a new period of revival and development started. By 1924, Mongolian statehood was achieved and the country came to be known as the Mongolian People's Republic. However, it came under a strong Russian and Soviet influence, and Mongolian politics began to follow the same patterns as the Soviet politics of the time (Nakami: 2005). Such a situation continued for a long time in Mongolia until Gorbachev delivered his seminar Vladivostok speech in 1986 (Soni, 2002: 106). By that time mounting internal and external economic imbalances became evident. Domestic prices were not adjusted to balance the higher costs of imported inputs, resulting in a distorted structure of investments and output. Budgetary subsidies expanded but were not equated by domestic revenue increases. In addition, increasing capital outlays led to expanding deficits that were financed almost entirely by loans from the Soviet Union.⁷

³ "Rise of Chinggis Khan" at <http://countrystudies.us/mongolia/10.htm>

⁴ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition: A Report*, Prepared by Nalini Burn and Oyuntsetseg Oidov.

⁵ The Outer Mongolian revolution of 1911 occurred when the Chinese province of Outer Mongolia declared its independence from the Qing dynasty during the Xinhai Revolution. For more details see, Soni, *Mongolia China Relations*, 2006.

⁶ The Mongolian revolution of 1921 was in fact a combination of two opposing phenomena. On one hand, there was the traditional desire of the Mongols for sovereignty and independence based on the dual foundation of pan-Mongolic ideas and anti-Chinese feelings. This was counterbalanced by the influence from outside by Soviet Russia and the Comintern that saw Mongolia as a major target for their revolutionary policies within the general global revolutionary strategy in the East.

⁷ "Modern Mongolia", 1911-84 at <http://countrystudies.us/mongolia/26.htm>

Such economic problems, combined with the emerging political and economic reforms in the former USSR, pressed Mongolia into the loosening of central economic, social and political directives. Reforms were limited and focused mainly on improving the efficiency of the command economy. However, by late 1989 Mongolia began to experience an unequivocal transformation of its economy from a centrally controlled one to a market-oriented system, followed by the opening of the country to international socio-economic and political forces (Nixson and Walters, 2000). What in fact pushed Mongolia to choose the path of transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economy⁸ was the breakdown of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in late 1989.

The new Constitution of Mongolia, adopted in 1992, guaranteed this choice. As a result of democratic changes in 1990- 92 the previous regime was peacefully demobilized, and Mongolia became a country with parliamentary governance and a multiparty system. In 1996, for the first time in 75 years, general elections brought to power a non-communist, democratic, political force through which a democratic restructuring process began. Since then the country has been undergoing the transition to democracy and a market economy, and changes and restructuring are taking place in all realms of social life.⁹

Within the framework of a policy on structural reform, a legislative base for a market economy and a variety of property reforms have emerged. Measures have been taken to improve the structural composition of the health, education and social welfare branches. In the course of these developments, people have become confident of having a better life and of the country's advancements through creative work. This is evident in the case of Mongolian women as well. However, in order to understand their status

⁸ Transitional economy is an economy which is changing from a centrally planned economy to a free market. Transition economies undergo economic liberalization, where market forces set prices rather than a central planning organization and trade barriers are removed, privatization of government-owned enterprises and resources, and the creation of a financial sector to facilitate macroeconomic stabilization and the movement of private capital.

⁹ Gerelt-Od Bayantur, (2008), *Democratic Transition and the Electoral Process in Mongolia*, A Thesis Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research, In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of Masters of Arts, In the Department of Political Studies, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

during the transition period it needs to know their situation in the pre- transition period or even before at least since the Mongol empire was founded.

1.1 Situation of Women in the Pre – 1921 Period

Until the revolution in 1921, Mongolia's economy was based on extensive nomadic livestock breeding, which the Mongolians had been practicing over many centuries. There was not a single industrial enterprise, which meant that there was no working class as such (Nakami: 2005). The influence of foreign capital and of domestic feudal lords kept the economy stagnant for a long period of time.¹⁰ Until the mid 1920s there was no electricity, no railways, no automobiles and not even a national currency in Mongolia. This has had affect on the situations on Mongolian women also. From the earliest Mongolian history, compared to other civilizations, Mongolian women had the power to influence society. Even though men were dominant in society, many turned to women in their lives for advice. While developing organizations within the Mongol Empire, Chinggis Khan asked for assistance from his mother. He honored the advices women in his life offered. Chinggis Khan permitted his wives to sit with him and encouraged them to voice their opinions. Because of their help, Chinggis was able to choose his successor.¹¹

Mongolian women have been known historically for their physical strength, bravery and devotion to family. Women were fighters as well. Under Chinggis' rule, every man and women was trained to keep the nation ready for battle. Mongolian women knew how to use a bow and arrow, were expert horsewomen, and even took part in wrestling contests (Morgan, 1986). Probably the most famous of these women was Kublai Khan's mother, Chinggis Khan's daughter-in-law, Sorghaghtani Beki.¹² She is mentioned in so many sources as one of the great figures of the 13th century. European

¹⁰ UNESCO, (1990), A Country Report on *the Status of Women in Mongolia*, prepared by Dr B. Dolgormaa, Bangkok.

¹¹ "Daily Life in the Mongol Empire",at http://www.mongolia-web.com/1221-daily-life-mongol-empire#Females_of_the_Mongolian_Empire.

¹² "Women of the Mongol Court" at <http://danielroy.tripod.com/cgi-bin/alternate/mongolia/opi10.html>

missionaries who visited the Mongols in the middle of the 13th century remarked that she was the most renowned of the Mongols. Persians wrote about her. A Middle Eastern physician wrote that “if I were to see among the race of women another who is so remarkable a woman as this, I would say that the race of women is superior to the race of men” (Curtin, 1996). She set the stage for all four of her sons to become Khans (kings). Although she herself was illiterate, she recognized that her sons had to be educated. Each one learned a different language that the Mongols needed in administering the vast domain that they had conquered.

Although she was a Nestorian Christian, she understood that if the Mongols were to administer a vast empire one of the ways to do so was to ingratiate themselves to the clergy of these various religions. So she and her sons protected and provided support for each of the religions within the Mongol domains. She supported Muslims, Buddhists, and Confucianists. She introduced her son Kublai to the ideas of Confucian scholars to help him understand and be prepared to rule China. Her another contribution to Mongol rule was that she recognized that pure exploitation of subjected peoples would make no sense. Ravaging the economy of the conquered territories would ultimately be self defeating. Instead of turning China into one big pastureland, she supported the Chinese peasantry. If the Mongols bolstered the local economy, eventually that would lead to increased production and increased tax collections. Each of her sons followed the same philosophy. Religious toleration, support of the religions, support of the indigenous economy, and literacy--all proved crucial to her son Kublai, the man who really bridged the transition from nomadic steppe conquest to governance of the domains the Mongols had conquered (Guisepi: 1992).

Like Beki another woman who contributed significantly to the Mongol rule was Chabi, the wife of Kublai Khan. Kublai realized that he would have to make concessions to the Chinese in order to rule China. There was no way for the Mongols to succeed on their own. One hundred million people couldn't be ruled with tens of thousands of Mongols. In addition, the Mongols had no experience in collecting taxes. In order to get that support from the Chinese, Kublai began to act like a typical Chinese emperor. In all these efforts he was helped by his wife Chabi who played an important role as his mother

had done. Chabi supported Tibetan monks who began converting the Mongol elite to Tibetan Buddhism. When Kublai conquered southern China, Chabi was influential in peacefully integrating this new area, into the Mongol empire. She took measures to maintain the Sung imperial family, providing them with funds and a palace, and protecting them from enslavement or death. Yet another extraordinary woman in Kublai Khan's era was Kublai's niece Khutulun. She relished the military life and loved combat. She even impressed Marco Polo who described her as so strong and brave that in all of her father's army no man could out do her in feats of strength.¹³

This shows that women in the elite were confident, to the extent of not to be bowled over by men and hence played an important role in the Mongol society. The emphasis on women playing military, political, and economic roles in this period is unique. Interestingly, by the end of 14th century, there were no more Mongol women playing roles as leaders. They became increasingly acculturated, and were no longer as prominent. Towards the end of the Mongol Empire, the increasing influence of Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism and Islamicisation saw greater limits placed on Mongol women.

On the other hand, in the traditional society of nomadic livestock breeding, women had neither political nor economic, nor spiritual rights (Benwell, 2006). There was not a single legal act which protected women's civil rights. Moreover, there existed a whole set of rules and dogmas, particularly religious ones, which restricted all social freedom of women and which were in fact an insult to their human dignity.¹⁴ Notwithstanding denial of political and social rights, women played a crucial role in the economic life. With men moving into the monasteries as lamas, the task of livestock breeding – the key economic feature of the society – had to be performed by women, in addition to housekeeping and childcare (Jagchid and Hyer, 1979). The distinctive feature of labour activity of Mongolian women gave them a say in family affairs. It is to be noted that the society could not exist without women labour. Over the centuries, Mongolian

¹³ Morris Rossabi, (1995), *Mongolia: The legacy of Chinggis Khan*, lecture delivered on 19 July 1995 at the DENVER art museum, Asian art department of San Francisco.

¹⁴ UNESCO, (1990), op.cit.

women had accumulated invaluable knowledge and skills for looking after cattle, home, processing of livestock products, preparation of meat and dairy products and also the making of diverse handicraft goods.

But in spite of their important role in production and domestic matters, the status of Mongolian women in the feudal era was low. Women had no right to choose their life partners, nor could they divorce. They were completely dependent on their husbands (Dashpurev, 1992). Even Lamaism kept women away from exposure to spiritualism. According to religious canons, women were treated as inferior and as servants to their husbands and children. Virtually all Mongolian women were illiterate at that time as learning and knowledge were denied to them.

Thus, in feudal Mongolia women were no better than biological beings and remained at the mercy of men. They were treated as individuals, and were not allowed to develop their intellectual capabilities. Moreover, they were “domesticated” to do hard work and to produce children.

1.2 Mongolian Women in the Pre-Transition Period

Although Mongolian women’s role and status in domestic matters and livestock breeding were important in the pre- transition period, women’s status outside the household was low and their political and spiritual rights were being denied (Batbayar, 1999). The People’s Revolution of 1921 brought major changes for the Mongolian women. It gave them increased access to education and health care and equal rights within the law. They became literate and were provided with opportunities to participate in the political, social and economic life of the country. The first Constitution of Mongolia adopted in 1924¹⁵ stated that “all citizens of Mongolia are entitled to equal rights irrelevant of their ethnic origin, religious belief or sex”. At the same time, women were given the right to vote and to be elected. Women’s civil rights were enshrined in the legislative documents of 1926.

¹⁵ Mongolia's first constitution, adopted by the National Great Hural on November 26, 1924, which was replaced by the 1940 constitution, closely modeled on the 1936 Soviet constitution.

In the years of the people's revolution women received primary, secondary and tertiary education much in the same way as did men. In education, a high rate of female participation and equality with males was achieved, higher than in most other Asian countries (Yembuu & Munkh-Erdene, 2005). The first literacy school for women was set up in 1921, for 20 students in Ulaanbaatar. By 1931, about 40 percent of the children enrolled in primary schools were female. Until the late 1980s, primary school enrollment for the population was almost universal and a system of boarding schools provided access to secondary education for both the rural boys and girls. By 1969, it was revealed that 75 per cent of the females had received some form of education which further increased to about 95 per cent by 1989. The opening of the State University in 1942 gave men and women alike the opportunity for higher education. During the socialist period literacy levels rose and the gap between male and female literacy rates narrowed down from about 16 percent in 1963 to below 3 percent in 1989 (Robinson and Solongo, 2000).

Furthermore, Mongolian women worked in all sectors of the public sphere similar to men. The socialist period saw an increase in female participation in decision-making and public life. In 1925, the first women were appointed to positions in local government and in 1929, one was appointed as a member of the People's Supreme Court. In 1931, 30 percent¹⁶ of local government officials, including two *aimag* (provincial) governors, were women. Later on, quotas of female representation were legally guaranteed in parliament, in ministerial posts and at government and *aimag* levels, though there were proportionately fewer women than men to be found in the most senior posts (Robinson and Solongo, 2000).

In health care, medical services were provided by the state for men and women alike throughout the county at *sum* (local district) level. Improved health care during the socialist period resulted in a sharp increase in life-expectancy rates between the 1921 and 1990, which rose by six years between 1960 and 1990 alone. The different needs of males and females were reflected in the provision made for maternal and child health; pre-natal rest-homes were set up in all *sums* and maternity leave was generous. Over 90 per cent of rural women gave birth in hospitals. This provision resulted in a decrease in

¹⁶ Central Statistical Board of The MPR Office 1921- 1986, Ulaanbaatar, 1986.

maternal death rates from 170 per 100,000 live births in 1970 to 120 in 1990, and also a decrease in infant mortality.¹⁷

Under centrally planned economy socialist state guaranteed employment and implemented a formal equitable labour policy. However, so-called women's occupations have been formed when health care sector, education, child daycare and other sectors were dominated by female workforce. Government took many measures to build a large work force. During 1960- 70, emphasis was given on social welfare, health condition, pension benefits and establishment of professional training centers where women could get training. These measures obviously helped women in building up their own social roles and identities. But at the same time, they were also the manifestation of an attitude that women are not active participants of social development, rather they are passive recipients of social wealth. Such vision of women's role and place has not been changed even during Mongolia's transition to democracy and market economy in the post- 1990 period.

1.3 Mongolia's Transition to Democracy

In the last decade of the twentieth century, two dramatic political changes appeared in Mongolia: the transition towards democracy from communism and market oriented economy from centrally controlled economy. These changes have had huge impact on the political life, economy and society, as well as on the national structure of Mongolia. The terms *perestroika* and *glasnost*¹⁸ brought ideas of democracy into Soviet and Mongolian political discourse. As such the ideas of Freedom, transparency, social integrity, human rights, free media, and free markets began to influence People's mind which were absolutely new to Mongolians. These ideas fomented a very active social, economic, and political life not only in Eastern European countries, but also in Mongolia.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Glasnost (Openness) was the policy of maximal publicity, openness, and transparency in the activities of all government institutions in the Soviet Union, together with freedom of information, introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in the second half of the 1980s, and is often paired with Perestroika (Restructuring), another reform instituted by Gorbachev at the same time, referring to the restructuring of the Soviet political and economic system.

This shift in policy provided a great opportunity for Mongolians to understand the functional realities of capitalism and to make important decision for the country's move towards democracy. However, in the chaotic transition period, the people of Mongolia were confused about the rationality of democracy and a free market economy, although they had hope that these might improve the quality of life. The transition itself was a gradual process; it was not a process whereby overnight an authoritarian country could become a democratic country (Pomfret, 2000).

Amid confusion and hope the overall situation was quite clear, i.e., with the collapse of the USSR, Mongolia began drastic changes in its entire system due to its highly ideological, authoritarian party rule that had lasted for seventy years (Soni, 2002). Mongolia now embarked on an open, competitive multi-party system disclaiming the socialist model and introduced free market reforms including a major privatization move. Earlier, events in December 1989 and early 1990 marked a crucial moment in Mongolian history when the country could have either moved towards democracy or remained communist. During that time, there was a great upsurge in public political activity, as a series of peaceful demonstrations were held in Ulaanbaatar, demanding faster political and economic reforms. The emergence of further opposition groups, together with escalating public demonstrations (involving as many as 20,000 people), led to a crisis of confidence within the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary party (MPRP) itself. Following the dialogue initiated between MPRP officials and representatives of the Mongolian Democratic Union (MDU) amid street protests in the capital Ulaanbaatar, the entire Politburo of the MPRP resigned in March 1990, and a new leadership took over the party's reign.

Though the countrywide democratic movement started bringing aggressive reforms in the country's political and economic spheres, it essentially contained "a nationalistic motivation rather than a democratic one." It soon turned out to be a struggle against Communism, which was held responsible for ruining the country. The dominant factor in this struggle was to bring radical changes, which could take the country towards prosperity by correcting the mistakes committed by the Communist leaders in the past. Besides, it provided a fair opportunity for both the government and the people to carry

out open discussions on the prevailing situation and find out ways to overcome the problems. As such reforms were urgently required for the prosperity of the Mongolian people not only in the domestic political, social and economic fields but also in the foreign affairs. It further gained momentum due to the collapse of the former USSR in 1991 and the end of the Cold War (Soni, 2008).

Political, economic and ideological changes enabled Mongolia to bring about three major results: (a) for the first time in nearly 70 years it allowed Mongolia to open itself to the outside world and pursue an independent foreign policy. Secondly; (b) Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) admitted Mongolia as a fullfledged member, that was not possible during the Soviet times as it would have divided the solidarity of the Socialist bloc; and (c) Mongolia declared to engage itself in the broad perspectives of maintaining a balance in its relations with the two neighbours - Russia and China. In general, the emergence of new situation under the impact of democratic reforms and economic restructuring brought Mongolia at a cross-road where it had to consider its future socio-economic development in the framework existing realities. A critical reappraisal of Mongolia's own policy helped the country to change many of its existing policies which were thought to have held back development. In the process, in 1990 Mongolia went to its first democratic multi-party election to the parliament, which unlike the cold war era opened the door for new democratic forces in the country to enter into the government (Soni, 2001). And indeed in 1996, for the first time in the history of Mongolia, democratic government took over the power.

1.4 Status of Women During Transition Period

With democratic transition of the society people of Mongolia got broad opportunities for development. The new constitution adopted in 1992 guaranteed freedoms and human rights for all citizens, which also gave way to the emergence of formal and informal sectors based on the private property alongside the state property. Self-employed group of population including women was formed, engaging in diverse activities on demand of the market. According to figures of the State Statistical Office released in June 1996, women accounted for 48.9 per cent of the able-bodied population and 49.2 per cent of the labor force. They constituted 63.9 per cent of employees working

in the educational sector, 67.1 per cent of health and social welfare workers, 41.7 per cent of industrial workers, 37.0 per cent of construction workers, 55.9-64.7 per cent of those engaged in trade, public services, hotels, and catering, 45.9 per cent of those employed in agriculture and animal hunting, 32.0 per cent of transportation and communication employees, 52.4 per cent of those in the financial sector, 37.9 per cent of State civil servants in the domain of public administration and insurance, and 45.5 per cent of those engaged in commercial and population services.¹⁹

As per the 2000 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia²⁰, women accounted for 50.4 per cent of the total population, of which 54.9 per cent lived in cities and towns, and 43.2 per cent in provinces. Girls of 0-15 years made up 43.2 per cent of the total; women of 16-54, 47.4 per cent; and women above 55, 9.4 per cent (NSO: 2000)²¹.

However, evidences suggest that the austerity program and structural reforms launched during the transition period led to a gradual deterioration of social services as well retrenchment and unemployment. Position of women significantly deteriorated as they had borne costs of the transition disproportionately. They suffered from higher rate of unemployment, inadequate health care services, low access to loans and poverty. Poverty has been most apparent in the lives of female headed households, the number of which was doubled in 2000 from what was during 1990-1997 to reach at 54,530. One fourth of these were poor women with six or more children. In addition, prostitution and trafficking in women were new social phenomenon emerged in the Mongolian society (Robinson and Solongo, 2000).

The social crisis accompanying transition to market economy hit women harder than men. More than 50 per cent of the unemployed, registered with employment regulation offices and actively looking for a job, were women. Of the 69.5 per cent

¹⁹ State statistical office, (1996), Ulaanbaatar.

²⁰ Since the first census in 1918, series of censuses were held in 1935, 1944, 1956, 1963, 1969, 1979, 1989, and 2000. The 2000 census was the first census organized in transitional economic period of centrally planned economy to market economy. In addition, it was the first census to follow UN principles and guidelines for conducting population and housing census.

²¹ Cited in B. Robinson and A. Solongo, "The Gender Dimension of the Economic Transition in Mongolia", 2000.

unemployed youth under 35, young women and girls make up 52 per cent. According to statistical data, in the transitional years, the level of unemployed women was consistently higher than that of men. The reason has often been cited as negative impact of privatization, retrenchment and structural adjustment on women. Women were the first to be laid off upon closure or restructuring of traditional industries like processing (light) industries, services and trade, where they were predominant. Life for the majority of them became worse. Particularly women under 35 made up 52 per cent of unemployed people in 1998.²² Another example is that after disintegration of government owned agricultural farms and privatization of their livestock and machinery, more than 20,000 trained women lost their jobs.²³ At the same time, about 20,000 women aged between 35 and 55 years were pushed to early retirement on the grounds of having given birth to four or more children. Apart from causing significant financial and psychological loss it harmed them in many other ways. For example, having been pushed to early retirement, under the prevailing Social Security Law they forfeited their pensions which were replaced by small compensation of 6000-13000 MNT²⁴ (6-13 USD) per month. Such amount put these women at the extreme poverty level.²⁵

On its part Mongolian government seemed to have failed either to generate new jobs for these women or to provide them with loans or aid. Furthermore, no policy was implemented on training or retraining in order to improve skills or change profession through formal or informal education. Opportunities outside the state sector were fewer for women than for men. Loans from the government or international organizations were possible subject to the availability of proper mortgage or acquaintance (personal contact) in a bank. However, many women willing to and capable of running their own small or medium size private business were unable to get any loans. Women could not get large loans as they refused to give bribes, and so they could not enjoy fully their economic rights. This happened despite the National Programme of Action for the Advancement of

²² National Statistical Office of Mongolia, (1998).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The Mongolian Tugrik is the currency of Mongolia and the currency code for Tugriks is MNT.

²⁵ Baseline Report to the IWRAW- Asia Pacific, "Implementation of Mongolian Women's Employment Rights".

Women²⁶ saying that “mechanisms ensuring equal opportunities and improvement of women’s participation in distribution and ownership of property, loans, technologies and information should be created”.²⁷

Under Mongolian laws,²⁸ foreign investors enjoyed customs and income tax exemptions in the first three years of operation, but Mongolian citizens did not enjoy such advantages. Domestic business owners, particularly women, suffered from unfavorable conditions and were unable to develop their services or trade. Opportunities for obtaining small-scale loans for job generation and building up working capital continued to be limited for women.

Although privatization of livestock allowed herders to meet their needs for food and other goods, the workload of women-herders had significantly been increased. Female herders began to spend more time on processing products of animal husbandry, child-rearing activities and household work. Rural women were restricted to enjoyment of their legitimate rights in terms of working hours, wages and paid annual leave. Moreover, their contribution to the economic development was not recognized and rewarded properly. They had also been denied maternity leave and child care benefits. Because of high rate of inflation women had to work more hours to earn additional income. Public servants had to run private businesses after office hours. Domestic responsibilities and need for household subsistence contributed to such double and even triple burden of women. In 1996, the number of women heading families reached 46,000, which showed a two fold increase, compared to 1990. One fourth of these women had six or more children and half of them lived in poverty (Nixson and Walters, 2000).

Self-employment makes a significant contribution to the household and national economy. However, in the informal sector labour protection is still poor and people are not satisfactorily covered by social and medical insurance. During the period of this study

²⁶ The National Programme was adopted by the Mongolian government through Resolution No. 145 of 1996.

²⁷ Baseline Report to the IWRAW- Asia Pacific, op.cit.

²⁸ Article 11, *Foreign Investment Law of Mongolia*, (1993).

majority of self-employed women could not get paid maternity leaves and other benefits related to reproductive function. Notwithstanding such setbacks the opportunities for women to learn about democracy, acquaint themselves with the status of women around the world and share experience are increasing. Around 170 laws have been passed since the adoption of the 1992 Constitution of Mongolia, which contain many provisions prohibiting gender discrimination, such as, article 14²⁹ and 16³⁰ of the Constitution; paragraph 2 of article 1 of the Law on Elections to the State Great Hural³¹; article 19 of the Law on Courts; article 56 of the Code of Civil Procedure; article 15 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

What is significant to note here is that during the transition period, Mongolian women reached a comparably high level in the field of education, culture and health, and as per law of the country they even enjoy equal rights in the political, socio-economic and intellectual realms. But this, by no means, implies that Mongolia resolved all women-related problems. In the course of this research it has been found that women's involvement in decision-making declined sharply, compared with a situation under the previous regime (Ginsburg, 1998). Although the Constitution of Mongolia assures equal rights of men and women in all spheres, women's participation in political, social and economic decision making in comparison with men's was significantly lower. In the first democratically elected Parliament in 1992, number of women representation dropped to 3.9 per cent since 1990 and significantly decreased at local level. During socialist times, there was a quota system for female representation in state administration but this ceased after 1990.³² Women's position within the power structure was lower and their share of administrative and managerial positions was only 18.7 per cent. For example, in the Mongolian legal system there is a tendency for women's representation to be diminished,

²⁹ Article 14 [Constitution of Mongolia, 1992] Equality, Right to Personality.

³⁰ Article 16 [Constitution of Mongolia, 1992] Citizen's Rights.

³¹ Article 1, [Law on Elections to the State Great Hural] Elections to the State Great Hural (hereafter "elections") shall be universal. Mongolian citizens who, on the day of elections, are residing in the country, and have reached the age of 18, shall have the right to vote, irrespective of their nationality, ethnic origin, language, race, sex, social origin and status, property, occupation and post, religion, conviction and education. Those who have been certified insane by the medical conclusion and who are under the detention shall not be eligible to participate in elections. Citizens of Mongolia who have reached the age of twenty five and are eligible to vote may be elected to the State Great Hural.

³² Baseline Report to the IWRAW- Asia Pacific, op.cit.

as the power of the court's decision-making accelerates. Women's representation in parliament dropped from 24.9 per cent under the communist system to 8.4 per cent after the 2000 elections. Currently, women constitute 10.5 per cent in the Parliament and 11 per cent in the Government. There are no women amongst aimag and city governors and only 2.4 per cent of *soum* and district governors are women. Women make up 6 to 13 per cent of elected representatives at all levels of the local Hurals and 4-8 per cent of the Presidium of the Representatives at the local Hurals. There are no female Chair of the local hurals at all. In the judiciary, women form 70 per cent of all legal professionals, though, they constitute only 17.5 per cent amongst Supreme Court Judges.³³

Although the infant mortality rate decreased, the level of maternal mortality remained constant during the transition period. According to 1996 figures, of 100,000 deliveries, 33 per cent involved pregnancy, delivery or after-birth complications; 68.4 per cent of fertile-age women suffered from sexually transmitted diseases; and 51.4 per cent of pregnant women with leukemia were treated with iron acids (Neupert, 1995). The use of modern methods of family planning was not perceived as a vital need by couples and women. Phenomena such as prostitution and crime, compounded by a rise in domestic violence and the emergence of street children, became topical issues of Mongolian society during the transitional stage.

However, since 1990 together with men Mongolian women have been actively involved in the democratic transformation of the society. During the period of this study women were found to have started to unify their efforts in the struggle for their political, civil, economic and social rights. Now more than 40 women's NGOs direct their efforts to ensure full enjoyment by all women of their legitimate rights.³⁴ It is more so because although the Constitution of Mongolia and other legislation declared equal rights of men and women in all spheres of public life, in reality conditions were not created to implement them and proper measures were not taken. Such situation led to violation of rights of all citizens, particularly violations of women's rights. Laws that declared equality were considered as only symbolic as they treated men and women with different

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

approach. For example, women and men are entitled to rights to vote and to be elected in the same way, however, no measures were taken (a) to change social norms formed during hundreds of years that men manage the state, and (b) to eradicate gender imbalance in power.³⁵ This is one of the reasons why women have always been behind men in the political participation.

The next three chapters discuss the overall status of women in Mongolia in a concrete way. For the proper understanding of the subject, the social, economic and political status of the Mongolian women has been discussed in separate chapters which incorporate the research findings.

³⁵ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), op.cit.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL STATUS OF MONGOLIAN WOMEN

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SOCIAL STATUS OF MONGOLIAN WOMEN

Socio-cultural status of Mongolian women is a critical factor in the Mongolian society. New social values and beliefs have emerged during the transition from the socialist politico-economic system to the new system based on democracy, open-market economy, and open society. The Mongolian people developed new attitudes towards work, education, health, marriage, childbearing, childrearing, and family size. As a direct consequence of attitudinal changes in the Mongolian society, social inequality emerged as an important issue. Many factors have changed the characteristics of family lifestyle during the transition: the overall household income, the potential earnings of parents in the labour market, the affordability of mothers to work outside the home in the absence of State-provided childcare services, the availability and affordability of substitutes for childcare, women's level of education (which influences her employment potential and salary level), and the overall cost in money and time of raising a child into sustainable adulthood. These changes have resulted in several negative effects on the Mongolian society, such as declining household size, instability of marital unions, shrinking of caring capabilities of families, and increasing number of children on the street, child labour, and child sexual exploitation.

From the perspective of Mongolian women today, representations of women in Mongolian history and culture reveal many contrasts, forged by both the nomadic culture and a feudal social organization. In sharp contrast to neighbouring cultures, they do not convey a picture of women's subordination but are dominated by the icons of noble women. However, except for queens and wives of noblemen, who were involved only as consorts and mothers of rulers, most women were not involved in macro-level decision-making.

Women were excluded from public life, their status outside the household was low, and their political and spiritual rights were denied. During four centuries of feudal

theocracy, Lamaist Buddhism¹ played a major role in the Mongolian society. Herders were serfs, bound to fiefdoms by structures emanating from the theocratic and aristocratic class. Almost every two boys born to a family was customarily assigned to Lamaist celibate monasticism (44 per cent of the male population).² This custom contributed to the exceptionally low fertility rate and the small population size. Women's social status was affirmed her motherhood. Among herder families, the social value placed on women's role in the family and on motherhood was grounded in the nature of nomadic pastoral-hunting societies. The remoteness of the circular migration patterns associated with livestock management and the sparseness of the population scattered over vast distances in inhospitable terrain made the household - the *ger* - the locus of survival. However, in the modern Mongolian society several changes occurred in the women's social status, particularly during the period of this study, which have been highlighted in the following paragraphs.

2.1 Education

2.1.1 Formal Education

During the transition period of 1991- 2000, the overall situation of Mongolian women so far as their social, economic and political status is concerned can be described in both the positive as well as negative terms. To begin with, education is often seen as an important tool in raising the social status of women beyond the traditional attributes which ascribe status to women, such as bearing numerous children.

Under the socialist regime, educational policies were very successful as the literacy rate reached at 90 per cent regardless of sex, region or income level. In 1990s, economical disorder in the transition process brought the cut in educational budget, which had the direct impact on education system in general and on women education in

¹ Lamaism, a Tibetan branch of Buddhism, was introduced in the mid- 16th century. By the end of the 19th century, Lamaism had deeply penetrated Mongol's lives, nearly one third of the entire male population had become lamas (Buddhist monks) residing in and around some 700 monasteries in Mongolia, then known as Outer Mongolia.

² UNESCO, 1990, A Country Report on *the Status of Women in Mongolia*, prepared by Dr B. Dolgormaa, S. Zmambaga and L. Ojungerel.

particular. The rate of educational budget to the total, which used to be more than 10 per cent under the socialist regime, was put at 5.7 per cent in 1997. The cut in educational budget hit the economy of each household because the system was changed and parents had no option but to pay part of fee related to compulsive education. In Mongolia, even today tuition is free but parents have to pay for the costs related to children's education such as cost of clothing, textbooks, notebooks and other demands for school building repairs and school related social work. Also, for the children accommodated in the dormitory to go to school, fee for dormitory has also been increased.

2.1.1.1 Primary, Secondary and Higher Education

Providing men and women with education, without discrimination, with equal opportunities for acquiring a specialization, upgrading professional knowledge and developing their intellect has been perceived by Mongolia as one of the most important parts of State Policy.³ According to the Law on Education⁴, the educational structure of Mongolia has four tiers: pre-school, primary, secondary, and tertiary. Basic education covers grades 1-8 (primary and secondary) and is compulsory for everyone. As provided in the Constitution of Mongolia, every citizen of the country is entitled to receive primary and secondary education free of charge. Owing to the favourable conditions accorded to them by the State, women account for a majority of students and graduates in virtually all levels of schooling.

³ Government of Mongolia, (1999), Combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee of UN, cited in Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, (2002), Women in Development (WID) Profile-Mongolia.

⁴ The Laws on Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education were passed by the State Great Hural in 1995.

Table 1: Education Indicators for Mongolia, 1990–2000 (selected years)

Year	Adult literacy rate, (15 years and above), in per cent	Combined primary, secondary and territory gross enrollment ratio, in per cent	Education index
1990	96.5	60.4	0.845
1992	97.7	54.3	0.824
1995	98.9	57	0.849
1998	96.5	62	0.85
1999	97.8	66	0.872
2000	97.8	69.6	0.884

Source: NSO. Calculation for Mongolia HDR 2007; cited in National Report on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) – Mongolia.

During the period of this study crude enrollment rate of primary education was 102.5 per cent for boys and 103.4 per cent for girls. Compared to the international standard, Mongolia's enrollment rate of primary education was higher than the countries with similar income level. In the secondary level, enrollment rate was 51.8 per cent for boys and 64.2 per cent for girls. Since 1985, the enrollment rate of secondary school has been continuously dropping due to the increased school cost. In Mongolia, female's school enrolment rate has always been higher than male's in all levels of education. This is partly because children, especially boys are precious workforce for the households under the weak economy. As 1996 figures show, women represented 62 per cent of postgraduates doing Master's and higher degrees, 68.1 per cent of undergraduates doing a Bachelor's degree, 84 per cent of diploma course students, 52 per cent of primary and intermediate professional school students and 54 per cent of secondary school pupils.⁵

⁵ Government of Mongolia, (1999), Combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee of UN, cited in Country WID profile: Mongolia, Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, (2002), Women in Development (WID) Profile-Mongolia.

Likewise, more than half of the teaching personnel at all levels of schooling were women. These figures clearly attest to the peculiarity of gender indicators in the educational sector.⁶ However, it does not mean that education of the Mongolian women is impeccable. Due to their limited possibilities to benefit from retraining, part-time study or evening classes or to be covered by a system of continuous education after their first graduation, women rank lower than men according to the level of post-diploma education. Thus, in 1996, women made up only 12.3 per cent of scholars with titles. Often education and the specialization acquired by women do not meet their working and living needs. This is illustrated by numerous examples, in both urban and rural areas, when women with higher education, such as doctors, teachers, or engineers, prefer for certain periods of time not to work in their profession.⁷

According to the UNDP data, literacy rate in 1999 was 72.6 per cent for male and 52.1 per cent for female, which showed significant gender gap. However, UNICEF data (average of 1995- 1999) showed that literacy rate was 97 per cent for both men and women, which had no difference between sexes. In 2000, the literacy rate was 98.9 per cent for male and 98.7 per cent for female in the urban area, while in the rural area it was 95.9 per cent for male and 95.7 per cent for female.⁸ This result showed that the literacy rate was quite high and there was no gender gap like UNDP data, but it was lower in the rural area compared to the urban area.

2.1.2 Informal education

In the post- Soviet period expanding informal education designed for women has been one of the important ways of elevating the level of women's education and furthering their equal right to education. In offering informal education for women, it is essential that curricula be flexible, based on their needs, in an accessible and open form.

After finishing compulsive education, students had an option to be promoted to the 2 years of upper middle school or 1-3 years of vocational school, if they wished. As

⁶ Government of Mongolia, (1999), op. cit, p.12.

⁷ Ibid, p.12.

⁸ According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census

of the year 2000, there were 36 vocational training institutions and over 12,000 students were attending them (Statistical Yearbook, 2000). According to the statistics of the Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, in 1999, women occupied 52.2 per cent of the total number of vocational school students.⁹

2.1.2.1 The Gobi Women's Project

During the transitional stage, forms of informal education were taking shape. Thus, in 1994-1996 the Ministry of Enlightenment, in cooperation with UNESCO, developed and implemented a project on informal education for meeting the educational needs of Gobi women cattle-breeders, which covered 16,000 women in the six Gobi provinces of Dornogobi, Omnogobi, Bayanhongor, Gobi Altai, Overhangai and Dundgobi.¹⁰ The project was planned to be implemented through a system of distance education using print, radio, local learning groups and travelling tutors (Robinson and Solongo, 2000). The project has been evaluated and found to be appropriate for improving the level of education and culture and life skills of Mongolian women herders, sparsely located throughout the country. The project also broadened the view of education as no more than scientific knowledge. It demonstrated that education should address multifaceted aspects of human life and activities, and cover subjects ranging from healthy livelihood to family management and child-rearing.¹¹

The general public appreciated the training programmes broadcast repeatedly on radio which increased their outreach far beyond the women herders. As a result, urban and rural people alike, including men and children, benefitted from them, learning a lot in terms of general knowledge and life skills in a market economy environment. Therefore, the Government intended to continue its cooperation with UNESCO on the extension of the project with a view to larger target groups and refined curricula.¹² A variety of

⁹ Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, (2002), Country WID profile: Mongolia, Women in Development (WID) Profile-Mongolia.

¹⁰ Bernadette Robinson, (1999), "Open and Distance Learning in the Gobi Desert: Non-formal Education for Nomadic Women", Paper published in *Distance Education: An International Journal*, University of Queensland, Australia.

¹¹ Government of Mongolia, (1999), op. cit, p.12.

¹² Ibid, p.12.

training activities were also carried out by a host of women non-governmental organizations such as the Liberal Women's Brain Pool, Women for Social Progress Movement, Mongolian Women Lawyers' Association etc. further, the opening of Mother Oulen, a private college for women provided an opportunity to prepare activists for women organizations and diligent housewives.¹³ In view of this, developing the educational sector, creating a system that enables everyone to get an education according to his or her talent, interest and capability, improving the material bases of schools and kindergartens, eliminating school drop-outs by perfecting informal education, and widening study opportunities for men and women alike were considered to be the needs of the hour.¹⁴

2.2 Health

2.2.1 Women and Reproductive Health

As regards health conditions, all health services deteriorated after 1990 and real per capita expenditure on health was reduced by 42 per cent in the early 1990s. as a result, mortality rates increased for males and females, higher for males than female, even for males from age thirty onwards. During transition there has been a decline in nutrition and dietary balance, availability of safe water and sanitary services, and an increase in sedentary life style (Robinson and Solongo, 2000).

High maternal death rates are identified by the World Health Organization as an indicator of gender inequality. From 1990 onwards, there was a decline in maternal health care and facilities and an increase in maternal malnutrition, protein deficiency, and post-delivery toxemia, all leading in turn to an increase in birth complications, post-natal anaemia, premature birth and infant malnutrition and mortality. The maternal mortality rate doubled between 1990 and 1994; the rate for 1997 had returned to near pre-transition levels of 140 per 100,000 births in 1985- 89.

¹³ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.12.

Table 2: Maternal Mortality Rate per 100,000 Live Births, 1990-1998.

Year	1990	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Maternal Mortality Rate	119	200	240	212	185	176	143	157

Source: Health Management Information and Education Centre, 1998; cited in UNIFEM, 2001, *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition: A Report*, Prepared by Nalini Burn and Oyuntsetseg Oidov.

It is to be noted that there has been some regional variation in maternal mortality. It has been twice as high in rural as in urban areas, partly due to the rise of home deliveries resulting from the decline in local services (the maternal mortality rate has been found to be higher for home deliveries). By 1993, only 52 out of 187 maternity centers were functioning. This increased to 151 in 1994, but was still only half the number functioning in 1989. By 1996, there were 269 maternity centers helped by a grant from UNFPA, though 175 of these were judged to be inadequate in quality (Robinson and Solongo, 2000). By contrast, infant mortality rates had fallen during the 1990s, but this apparent reduction was due to a decrease in recording births and deaths as women's contact with health services was less, especially in rural areas. Infant mortality rates vary throughout the country according to location (rural and urban) and social groups. In order to improve health services, a reform of the health services came into being by which, priorities shifted from highly specialized healthcare and large urban-based hospitals to more local, family-doctor based, primary healthcare services and health promotion rather than disease treatment (Robinson and Solongo, 2000).

2.2.2 Family Planning and Birth Control

Average annual population growth rate significantly declined to 2.8 per cent during 1990's from 4.1 per cent during 1970-1990 as a result of successful expansion of family planning. Contraceptive prevalence rate among women in reproductive age increased to 42 per cent in 1997 from 15 per cent in 1992. Among the various methods,

IUD was the most popular (dominated 40 per cent of total users) but the preference was diversified compared to 1994.¹⁵

Table 3: Contraceptive Methods Used (In per cent)

	1994	1997
IUD	64	40
COC (PILL)	6	15.5
CONDOM	14	16
INJECTION	0.1	5.5
NORPLANT	0	0.4
ABSTINENCE	11	16.7
OTHERS	4.9	5.9

Source: NSO; cited in Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, Women in Development (WID) Profile-Mongolia, November 2002.

Until the end of 1980s, Mongolia pursued a population policy, which favoured large families and targeted rapid population growth. During those days availability of modern family planning methods was very limited. Since 1989, abortion is legal in Mongolia and hence, there were 260 abortions per 1,000 live births in 1997, which was an indicator of unmet needs of family planning. Abortions provided by private health services remained underreported and, therefore, the real figures were higher. Criminal abortions were also performed because the cost of abortion in public health service was too high, or the traveling distance was too long for many.¹⁶

¹⁵ Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, (2002), op. cit, p.11.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.12.

2.2.3 HIV/AIDS, STD

In recent years, the rapidly increasing rate of sexually transmitted disease (STD) has become a major health concern. From 1989 to 1998, the number of cases of syphilis increased by 66 per cent and gonorrhoea by 56 per cent. The prevalence of syphilis was 5.6 per 10,000 persons, gonorrhoea 16.3 per 10,000 persons and trichomoniasis 11.4 per 10,000 persons. There were only two reported cases of HIV infection, though, risky sexual behaviour was prevalent in Mongolia and the population remained vulnerable to the spread of HIV. High STD rates in the women engaged in sex work, alcoholism, changing sexual behavior amongst young people, low condom use, and increase of travel have been considered factors making the country vulnerable to the HIV epidemic.¹⁷

2.2.3.1 Combating HIV/AIDS

Work on combating HIV/AIDS was first launched by the Government in cooperation with WHO in 1987. That year the HIV/AIDS Reference Centre, with a fulltime staff and appropriate budget, was opened. Within the framework of the WHO project, it was implemented in three stages, national specialists underwent training, both abroad and in-country; laboratories for analyses were set up in provinces and towns; and the necessary equipment, instruments, chemical substances and diagnostic devices for analysis were supplied to urban and rural areas. Under the same project, 3.3 million condoms were distributed to people in high-risk groups. The National Committee on Combating HIV/AIDS was established in 1992 under the leadership of the Prime Minister and with subcommittees in the capital and provinces. The Committee discussed and approved the national programme on combating HIV/AIDS. The Law on Combating HIV/AIDS was passed by the State Great Hural in 1992.¹⁸

Important regulations and instructions on HIV/AIDS and STD diagnostic standards, high-risk groups and their coverage by check-ups, advice to guardians of HIV/AIDS infected individuals, guidelines for activities on fighting HIV/AIDS and

¹⁷ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁸ Government of Mongolia, (1999), op. cit, p.16.

sexually transmitted diseases (STD) to be carried out by provincial health centres, came into effect by the decrees of the Minister for Health and Social Care.¹⁹ Annually, an average of 127,000 to 200,000 people were identified as belonging to high-risk groups to undergo medical check-ups and about 20,000 to 25,000 of from were tested. A training of trainers for conducting educational work on HIV/AIDS and STD prevention for adolescents, for high-risk groups, and for the general public were organized for all provincial and *soum* teachers of biology, with the distribution of pertinent handouts.

In addition, at the initiative of the Mongolian Women's Federation nationwide seminars on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and STD for representatives of women's organizations were conducted within the framework of the project on reproductive health. The Mongolian Women's Federation also cooperated with WHO on the implementation of a small, US \$5,000 worth project for prostitutes regarding HIV/AIDS and STD.²⁰ It has become a tradition in Mongolia to commemorate World AIDS Day, with the active participation of youth and women's non-governmental organizations. Activities on finding and treating infected female prisoners were also organized in 1997. Since 1994 educating prostitutes, checking up on the street children, and providing necessary medical treatment has been carried out regularly in collaboration with women's and children's non-governmental organizations. More than 200 female prisoners and prostitutes have been covered by these activities. The Law on Combating HIV/AIDS, passed in 1994, does not contain any provisions that discriminate women or affect their legitimate interests.

2.3 Gender related Challenges/ Violence

Violence against women in Mongolia has been an obstacle to achieve the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms has been a matter of concern to the Mongolian government and the society at large. In all

¹⁹ Ibid, p.16.

²⁰ Ibid, p.17.

societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. The low social and economic status of women has been considered to be both a cause and a consequence of violence against women.²¹ In the case of Mongolia, women were found to be vulnerable to different kinds of violence during the period of this study.

2.3.1 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence including being presumptuous, causing physical, psychological, sexual and economical damage, abusing and forcing is existing realistically in the society and breaching interest of the certain part of the society. Since the domestic violence is linked with human private life and private secrets, it is very complicated and sensitive issue. It is common even in Mongolia as increase of crimes and offences which are being committed in domestic and household range proves that environment of crime perpetrating is becoming unrevealed and it is being acted in the family's limited sphere. Domestic violence is the most sensitive social issue because it causes a great loss for interest of women and children.

In a study on "Violence against Women and Legal Environment, Mongolia" carried out by UNIFEM, covering the situation in Ulaanbaatar for 1997- 1999, 326 cases were solved by the capital and districts' courts on application by 1037 women and girls for their sufferings from domestic violence and rape. It has been found that, 51.2 per cent of domestic violence was caused by family quarrel, 24.8 per cent - jealousy and 40.3 per cent - alcoholism. Mainly perpetrators of domestic violence were men and in view of the research on crimes which were committed in the family sphere, violators often included husbands (64.1 per cent) , former husbands (2.8 per cent), partners residing together (3.4 per cent), boyfriends (17.1 per cent) and fathers (4.9 per cent). It was revealed that for

²¹ The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, *Action for Equality, Development and Peace*, Beijing, China, September 1995, p.48.

three years (1997- 1999), 58 to 64 per cent of the perpetrators of domestic violence were husbands.²²

Table 4: Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (In percentage)

Husbands	64.1
Former Husbands	2.8
Partners Residing Together	3.4
Boyfriends	17.1
Fathers	4.9

Source: Compiled from *Journal of Women's Health*, Volume 18, Number 11, 2009.

As for the age group, 25-39 aged persons occupied the most percentage, i.e., 44.2 per cent, followed by 25-29 aged persons – 20.9 per cent, and 30-34 aged persons – 23.3 per cent. In the view of this fact, it can be concluded that violators are mainly 40 aged persons not the middle-aged persons. By the educational level, 33.4 per cent of perpetrators of domestic violence had incomplete secondary education which 31.6 per cent had complete secondary education. Even among the people who had higher education, there were quite lot cases of oppressing family members, apart from beating and detention of wives in the real life. It was also found that, more than half of the victims of domestic violence were violator's wives and 10 per cent included their mothers.²³

Crimes such as physical aggression, bodily injury and murder by perpetrators of domestic violence for their mothers, daughters, girlfriends and sisters constituted 57.4 per cent of all the criminal cases. It is notable that all women who suffered from domestic

²² SOROS Foundation, (2003), "Ways for Prevention of Domestic Violence", Mongolian Women Lawyer's Association, National Centre Against, at http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/domestic_handbook/dv_handbook.pdf

²³ Ibid, p.263.

violence also got psychological damage behind the physical oppression. Even there were crimes such as incitement of wives to suicide, threaten wives, girlfriends and daughters to kill, or cause a great damage as well as cruel treatment.²⁴ In a survey conducted by the National Centre Against Violence in 1998, on the question of how domestic violence affects participation in public life, 30.3 percent of respondents replied that it decreases interest to work, 22.7 per cent said that it affects self-confidence, 20 per cent opined that it affects their social status and that they lose respect from colleagues, 9.7 said about loss of patience, and 17.3 per cent named another consequence (lower participation in public activities, lower access to information, loss of friends and colleagues).²⁵ On punishment imposed to perpetrators of domestic violence carried out in Ulaanbaatar, the survey reflects that above 50 per cent of the violators were punished by the imprisonment for a period of 2 years and 3 per cent of them were punished by imposing remedial work.

In 1995, the National Centre against Violence (NCAV)²⁶, an NGO launched domestic violence prevention campaigns which were financially supported by the State and local governments in providing services to domestic violence victims. It operated its offices in two districts of Ulaanbaatar and eight provinces. It also runs six shelters for victims of domestic abuse, the only shelters available in the country. Rural populations have faced the worst domestic violence due to the lack of funding for services and a belief that domestic violence is a private matter.

However, since 1996, women's groups in the country had lobbied for a Domestic violence bill for which UNIFEM and other U.N. bodies provided training and support to effectively influence the policy process. Finally, the Parliament of Mongolia unanimously

²⁴ Ibid, p.263.

²⁵ Baseline Report to the IWRAW- Asia Pacific, "Implementation of Mongolian Women's Employment Rights".

²⁶ The National Center Against Violence was initially founded in 1995 by three Mongolian women's organizations: the Liberal Women's Brain Pool, Women for Social Progress, and the Women Lawyers' Association (WLA). At that time it was known as the Center Against Violence (CAV). After CAV became an autonomous organization, it reregistered with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs as the National Center against Violence in January 1998.

adopted a Domestic Violence Bill on 13 May 2004²⁷. But this law was deemed insufficient for several reasons, including a lack of deterrence, inadequate victim protection, and the lack of legislation that would specifically prohibit spousal rape. Once the offender was prosecuted, there was no other known police or government intervention in domestic violence cases. Furthermore, authorities often used the Administrative Responsibility Law instead of the Criminal Code to respond to domestic violence. This law was not very effective as in most of the cases only fine was imposed on the offender.

2.3.1.1 Measures taken by the government and NGOs

Existence of domestic violence is recognized in public, and could draw policymakers' attention. As a result finding ways to combat it; organizing periodical training, disseminating information and awareness, expanding activities of the centers which render realistic assistance to victims of violence, are being done by mainly women's non-governmental organizations since 1990s. Although, working group on developing the draft law against domestic violence headed by Ts. Byambadorj, Vice-Speaker of the Parliament was established by the Mongolian Parliament in December 2002,²⁸ this fact does not prove yet that Members of the Parliament are ready to adopt the law, but it is an expression of being supported of this issue up to the level of establishing a Task force.

Yet in 1996, the Mongolian government approved the Program of Action on the Advancement of Women, which paid special attention to violence against women and abuses to their human rights.²⁹ Implementation of the Government's program was less than expected level, and there was no program on reducing domestic violence, and also financial support for the non-governmental organizations which were working on the issue, was insufficient.³⁰ Nobody will have doubt that state authorities have all the power

²⁷ The Law on Fighting against Domestic Violence was adopted in 13 May 2004 and came into force in 2005.

²⁸ SOROS Foundation, 2003, op.cit, p.266.

²⁹ Tuul Tsend-Ayush, "The girl child in Mongolia Empowerment through participation and advocacy", Compiled and edited by Ruth Kahurananga and Marina Mafani, International Policy and Advocacy Department, World Vision International, 2005.

³⁰ SOROS Foundation, 2003, op.cit,

and advantage such as adoption of a law on prevention and combat of domestic violence as well as supporting financially at large scale. But the main initiatives are being taken by the non-governmental organizations to combat domestic violence in Mongolia.³¹ Mongolian Women's Lawyers Association (MWLA), National Center Against Violence (NCAV) and other women's non-governmental organizations have been taking periodical measures such as studying this issue, conducting training and advertisement, providing victims of violence with temporary refuges, giving them psychological and legal advises, advocacy on violators' behavior and development of the draft law against domestic violence.

An International conference on "Concept of the law against domestic violence" was jointly organized by the MWLA and NCAV with financial support of the Soros foundation on 9-11 December 2002 in Ulaanbaatar which gave way to the establishment of Central Asian Forum on combating domestic violence. It became a big step on establishment of the non-governmental organizations' network at the regional level.³² This Forum's objective was to make its own contribution in the creation of social and legal environment directed to prevent and protect women from domestic and household violence as well as collaborating with individuals and public organizations for the same purpose. Non-governmental organizations are working even today in this direction to disseminate information on the international conference and involve more non-governmental organizations to this regional network on combating domestic violence.³³

The ability of the non-governmental organizations to carry out work on the voluntary basis to serve and influence the victims of violence as well as interest shown by the international donor bodies in funding issues on combating domestic violence are very important for the welfare of Mongolian women .³⁴ But due to lack of financial source of the non-governmental organizations, they cannot work at the local level and because of insufficiency of support by the state authorities and appropriate legal regulation, it is

³¹ Ibid, p.266.

³² Ibid, p.267.

³³ The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995, op.cit, p.52.

³⁴ SOROS Foundation, 2003, op.cit, p.267.

impossible to completely solve the issue. Non-governmental organizations' activity cannot go ahead from providing victims of violence with refuges for a few days; apart from giving free-of-charge legal and psychological advises.³⁵ Even these kinds of services are not sufficient and available for everyone who is victim of violence. Such situation was relevant even in the pre- 2000 period.

Indeed, it becomes necessary to study domestic violence as a type of legal offence, to train professionals to conduct such studies, to perfect the data collection, to organize training for members of the legal profession, to mobilize all concerned organizations- i.e., law enforcement agencies, cultural and educational institutions- to conduct an enlightenment campaign for boys and girls on ethics, and to fight alcoholism. One of the main ways of preventing domestic violence should be increasing public awareness, in particular, the knowledge of girls and women on self-defense. In this regard, non-governmental organizations such as the Mongolian Women Lawyers' Association and the Centre for Child's Rights display great enthusiasm. Still more needs to be done to help women, families and children affected by domestic violence.

2.3.2 Sexual Harassment

Another problem faced by women is unspoken but widespread sexual harassment at the workplace. The United States Department of State reports that among unemployed women under the age of 35, one-half were self-reported victims of workplace sexual harassment.³⁶ What was revealed during the period of this study is that scarcity of jobs created a situation conducive to sexual harassment. Cultural attitudes and dependence on the employer due to lack of jobs in general prevented an active struggle against this form of gender-based violence. Women resisting assaults from their supervisors or employers had to leave their jobs in some cases. Statistical data on this problem is not available because women do not complain due to fear of losing a job and later risk of getting their marriage dissolved. The gendered character of these work settings at the local level and

³⁵ Shagdarsuren Oyunbileg, (et.al), (2009), "Prevalence and Risk Factors of Domestic Violence among Mongolian Women", *Journal of Women's Health*, Volume 18, Number 11, 2009.

³⁶ Cited in, U.N. Statistics Division, [Social Indicators](http://www.stopvaw.org/mongolia.html) at <http://www.stopvaw.org/mongolia.html>.

the relations of power between women and men are starkly exposed. But these relations of power are closely inter-woven with those in the family. Women stand to lose jobs and/or family. Women are even forced to sacrifice their self-esteem, autonomy and well-being for material security. During 1990s the one existing shelter run by NCAV housed 342 women for a total of 3,060 days in three years (1997 to 1999).³⁷ These figures indicate the dearth of facilities as well as the likelihood that most women will not go to a shelter unless they fear great risk to their physical security and survival.³⁸

2.3.2.1 Legal Provisions Related to Sexual Harassment

Mongolian legislation and regulations have some general provisions concerned with sexual harassment in the workplace. However, during 1990s, there were no proper policies, programs and legislation or investigation procedures that addressed sexual harassment in the workplace and there was also no legal environment to solve offences of sexual harassment at workplace.³⁹ For instance, the Labour Law of Mongolia (1999) includes a number of chapters on women's labour and work safety, but does not have a single provision on sexual harassment in workplace.⁴⁰ Absolutely no provision has been made to prohibit sexual harassment in workplace,⁴¹ which weakens protection of women's rights in the labour market. Therefore, such cases are not proceeded in the court. But can be heard in accordance with the international treaties Mongolia has ratified. However, the professionals who may apply the international mechanisms do not have much information and knowledge about human rights issues or they have simply insensitive attitude towards such issues.

³⁷ National CEDAW Watch Network Centre (NCWNC), 2000, *Implementation of the Mongolian National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Women*, Ulaanbaatar; cited in United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition: A Report*, Prepared by Nalini Burn and Oyuntsetseg Oidov.

³⁸ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition: A Report*, Prepared by Nalini Burn and Oyuntsetseg Oidov.

³⁹ UNIFEM. (2009), "Strengthen the implementation of the laws on VAW in Mongolia, A Research Summary".

⁴⁰ "Sexual harassment is common in foreign invested companies", 17 January, 2007; cited in, "Legislations covering sexual harassment in the workplaces" at <http://www.stopvaw.org/sites/3f6d15f4-c12d-4515-8544-26b7a3a5a41e/uploads/sexualfactsheeteng.pdf>

⁴¹ A trainer's manual on sexual harassment in workplace, 2006, cited in, "Legislations covering sexual harassment in the workplaces".

In addition, it is rather difficult to successfully investigate cases of sexual harassment at workplace in the absence of strong legal provisions as witnessed during the period of this study. There has been an approach to refer such cases to rapes and apply the criminal code in investigating sexual harassment cases. However, written, oral, body and physical harassment were not addressed at all in the legislation. These discrepancies in the legal system created difficulties in revealing and stopping sexual harassment. Despite the growing awareness of efforts and campaigns by women's NGOs, there was lot of uncertainty among the women subjected to such cases about where to seek help and protection.⁴² The sexual harassment law was in fact deemed insufficient for several reasons, including the lack of deterrence, inadequate victim protection, and the lack of legislation.

2.3.2.2 Law on Promotion of Gender Equality

The following two articles contained in the law on promotion of gender equality in Mongolia deal with sexual harassment at work place:

Article 4.1.7 – “sexual harassment” as an unwelcome sexual advance made in verbal, physical and/or other forms, intimidation, threat and/or other forms of coercion that makes sexual intercourse an unavoidable option for the victim or that creates an unbearable hostile environment and/or causes damage in terms of the person's employment, professional, economic, psychological and/or any other form of well-being.

Article 11.4. In order to prevent and keep the workplace free of sexual harassment and to maintain zero tolerance of such harassment, an employer shall take the following measures:

11.4.1. incorporate in organization's internal procedures specific norms for prevention of sexual harassment in a workplace and the redress of such complaints; and

⁴² UNIFEM, 2009, op.cit.

11.4.2. design and conduct a program on training and retraining geared toward creating a working environment free from sexual harassment, and report on its impact in a transparent manner.⁴³

2.4 Rape

Rape is illegal in Mongolia under Article 126 of Mongolia's Criminal Code.⁴⁴ According to this provision, punishment has been divided into three categories, which are as follows:

- a) Sexual intercourse by physical violence, threat of violence or in other forms, or by taking advantage of helpless state of the victim, as well as by humiliating the victim shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of up to 5 years.
- b) The same crime committed by humiliating or torturing the victim; inflicting a severe or a less severe bodily injury; repeatedly; rape of a person under the legal age; in a group or by group at an advance agreement shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of more than 5 to 10 years.
- c) The same crime committed by a recidivist, rape of a child under the age of 14, or rape entailing death of the victim or another grave harm shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of more than 15 to 25 years or the death penalty.

From 1998 to 2000 there were 1146 registered cases of rape in Mongolia.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Anti-AIDS and STI Department of the Epidemiological Centre reported 734 women seeking STI treatment after being raped. City and district courts, however, had shown only 191 rape cases being brought to trial⁴⁶. This low number of prosecuted rape charges might have been due to women withdrawing their complaint in the face of embarrassment or pressure, the dispute being settled out of court or the need or pressure

⁴³ Law of Mongolia on Promotion of Gender Equality at <http://sgdatabase.unwomen.org/uploads/Draft%20Law%20on%20Gender%20Equality%20-%202009.pdf>

⁴⁴ Criminal Code of Mongolia, (2002), at http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=183247.

⁴⁵ National Center Against Violence, (2002) at <http://saynotoviolence.org/issue/facts-and-figures>

⁴⁶ Ibid

to conceal the rape as it was perpetrated by a known assailant.⁴⁷ There was no law specifically targeting spousal rape, and local NGOs state that rape was generally underreported.⁴⁸

2.5 Human Trafficking

An assessment of the situation of human trafficking reveals that women and children both boys and girls were trafficked within the country and cross border. The purpose of trafficking included forced prostitution, forced labour, servile marriages and forced into crime-related activities. Additionally, the Criminal Code made provisions to penalize various aspects of trafficking, including the sale or purchase of human beings. Article 113 of the criminal code⁴⁹ states that selling or acquiring a human is punishable by 3 years of imprisonment. If the sale or purchase is related to prostitution or involves a minor, the punishment increases up to 5 to 10 years. The Mongolian Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 113, allows for only a very narrow application of these articles. Many cases of trafficking have actually been tried as “forced prostitution”. While the federal government continues to make efforts to address trafficking, including creating a Special Investigation Unit, funding for these efforts have been minimal.⁵⁰

Places of destinations for national trafficking was Ulaanbaatar mainly for forced prostitution⁵¹ and other sex-related work. International destinations included China, Malaysia, Macao, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan for forced prostitution; South Korean and China for servile marriages (Laczko and lee, 2003), and China for forced criminal activities such as stealing on the street. There was also a report on trafficking for human organs and international adoption but evidence was not found. Apart from being recruited by agents that put advertisement in newspaper, trafficking was done by community acquaintances and strangers. Recently, there has been a report about mothers

⁴⁷ Tuul Tsend-Ayush, (2005), op.cit.,p. 50.

⁴⁸ U.N. Statistics Division, (2000), op.cit.

⁴⁹ Criminal Code of Mongolia, (2002), at http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=183247.

⁵⁰ U.N. Statistics Division, (2000), op.cit.

⁵¹ Mongolia, Reproductive Health, Gender and Rights, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, UNO, Ulaanbaatar, 2000; cited in *NHRCM and CHRD, (2002), The Crime of Trafficking of Women and Children in Mongolia: The Current Situation, Ulaanbaatar.*

whose daughters were stolen from hotel room, or snatched from them while walking in crowded market in China, (Skrobanek, 2007). Such aggressive mode of trafficking reflects the high demand of Mongolian girls for dubious reasons.

Information also includes the involvement of parents who abuse their authority and put their children in trafficking ring. For instance in one case a Mongolian man doing business overseas put his wife and child as collateral for his debt and found out later that they were sold to other person. In another case, a mother sold her own daughter in foreign land (Skrobanek, 2007). Survey from various agencies in Mongolia and information sharing with authorities reveal the fact that human trafficking especially of women and children has drastically been increased at par with the desire to migrate overseas for study, employment and marriage.⁵² Most importantly, there had been no appropriate mode of operation to stop trafficking that would stop the vulnerability of women who wanted to migrate for overseas employment. In the absence of national statistics on number of trafficked women and children, it is difficult to know the exact number of trafficked ones. Even though, it is estimated that among 30,000 to 40,000 Mongolian nationals residing in China many of them might be trafficked women, and children.⁵³ At the national level, in one night survey in Ulaanbaatar, the police found about 1,500 women and adolescents working in sex-related premises such as bars, massage parlour and in hotels catering for foreign tourists. The Chief of the Office of the National Security Council stressed that “though the available statistics do not capture the whole picture of trafficked victims but comparing to the number of Mongolian population it reflects a serious problem that requires due attention from the state to learn from and share experiences with other countries on how to tackle the problem effectively especially in developing legislation that can suppress the crime and also assist the victims”. (Skrobanek, 2007)

⁵² UNICEF, (2007), Main findings of “Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Mongolian girls and women”, A survey conducted by Mongolian Gender Equality Center. p.4.

⁵³ Ibid, p.4.

2.5.1 Trafficking through Marriage Arrangements

In the context of human trafficking, marriage migration is another serious issue that demands examination. What has been noticed during the period of this research is that the overwhelming majority of the marriages were between Mongolian women and Korean men i.e., 98.8 per cent or 1.668 Korean-Mongolian marriages, while the number of registered marriages between Mongolians and Germans was 155, followed by Chinese-Mongolian marriages at 137 and Japanese-Mongolian marriages at 119.⁵⁴ Fifty per cent of the women did not have their passports with them as their documents were kept by the broker, husband or in-laws. A majority (24 out of 30) were dissatisfied with their lives because their financial situation had not improved. They were financially dependent on their husbands, and were practically unable to send money to home. Women did hard household work, took care of their husbands and relatives, provided sex to their husbands, assisted in earning household income (including heavy and unfamiliar farm work). Half of the women were reported to have done this work because they were forced. They were also victims of high level of physical and sexual abuse by their husbands and verbal and psychological abuse by their in-laws. They were beaten, punished and confined inside the homes for poorly performing household chores, for not cooking Korean food, for “wandering” outside and for calling Mongolia on the phone. In some of the cases, husbands were reported to be mentally retarded or addicted to narcotic substances.⁵⁵

Sixty per cent of the women were found to have deterioration in health, especially in mental health. They felt high levels of stress, depression, and anxiety. They felt isolated. Very few women had social support through church groups; the rest received no support from any organization or individual while living in Korea. Despite such harsh living conditions, none of the women wished to return home because they had no home of their own, no job prospects, no sources of income in Mongolia and feared that wide-spread corruption would make it impossible for them to live in Mongolia.

While most of the marriages between Mongolian women and foreigners were

⁵⁴, The UB POST, “Mongolia Must Battle Increase in Human Trafficking”, 13 April, 2012.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

based on mutual affection, it is clear that marriage became a form of trafficking in women and girls for forced labour and sexual exploitation. Women were forced to choose migration through a marriage arrangement because of desperate financial and living conditions and they had no hope for any opportunities to make a living in Mongolia. Marriage brokers and foreign husbands who benefitted from this double and triple exploitation (sexual services, domestic work, household income generation work) remained outside regulation by Mongolian laws.⁵⁶

2.5.2 The Mode of Operation for Combating Trafficking

The mode of operation, which is in the interest of authority, is the criminal approach that focuses on criminal sanction and border control movement. The amendment of Criminal Code since 2000 has provisions to criminalise the selling and buying of persons that include other purposes apart from sexual exploitation and prostitution, (Munkhbat, 2007). However, in practice the focus of criminal investigation is mainly on prostitution. Many state agencies and international donors are involved in trainings for law enforcers, prosecutors and judges to build their capacity in detecting the crime and prosecuting the trafficking cases and yet the report of prosecuted cases that traffickers are punished is minimal, (Skrobanek, 2007).

The reason for having such small number of trafficking case report even before 2000 derives from the fact that victims were afraid of losing face, bringing shame to their family due to having been forced in prostitution. And on the other hand there was no victim support system in the criminal court procedure that was also time consuming.⁵⁷ Moreover the blaming and punishing victims who were involved in prostitution still remained and reflected in the court ruling from which trafficked victims were fined for the same reason. It is believed among NGO practitioners that the criminal approach outlined in the framework of the provisions of Criminal Code, which has the prime purpose to stop crime but not to protect the human rights of trafficked women and children, has been the main reason for minimal report of trafficking cases.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ NHRCM and CHRD, 2002, op. cit, p.

2.5.3 National Legal Framework and International Treaties

The under reported trafficking cases are due to the lack of victim and witness protection and the undue process of the criminal investigation procedure. These are the reasons for responsible state agencies to review the relating provisions in the Criminal Code and proposing for the improvement of the national legislation on human trafficking.⁵⁸ By incorporating the international concern on the problem of human trafficking and the state accountability outlined in the Palermo Protocol, the Mongolian government was expected to consider formulating a stand along legislation on human trafficking rather than including it in the national Criminal Code.

The Palermo Protocol⁵⁹ is supplementary to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime adopted in 2000. It is an international instrument that provides for the first time the international definition on trafficking in persons and outlined the obligations of state parties to suppress the cross border trafficking and ensure the assistance and protection of trafficked victims. Moreover, the UN Human Rights Commission also formulated guidelines for the protection of human rights of trafficked persons especially of women and children. Apart from the two documents, other international treaties that Mongolia became state party for instance CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) and CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) are binding documents that have many articles relating to the problem of trafficking of women and children. The recommendations from the CRC Committee as well as the CEDAW Committee to the Mongolian government after receiving the national periodic reports especially on the criminal sanction of the problem are not considered to be feasible in the provisions of Criminal Code (Skrobanek, 2007).

⁵⁸ UNICEF, (2007), op.cit.

⁵⁹ At present, 109 countries have signed and 18 countries have joined. Mongolia signed the Palermo Protocol in May 2008

2.5.4 National Plan and Machinery

The legal environment to deal with trafficking of humans has been in existence in Mongolia. The sale and purchase of persons is a crime in Mongolia. For the first time in Mongolia, provision has now been made to recognize the crime of trafficking humans for profit. This rule states that a person may be “sentenced to prison for five to eight years for bringing people abroad in order to practice prostitution” and was put into the Criminal Law of 2000. This is the very first rule in Mongolia to deal with the crime of recruiting and bringing people abroad for profit. The first offender found guilty of the crime of human trafficking was sentenced to prison under this law.⁶⁰ Article 113 of the Criminal Law⁶¹ has determined the new legal framework to deal with human trafficking. The second part of this article⁶² says that an offender will be sentenced to prison for five to ten years for selling and buying a human body in order to use organs or practice prostitution, repeating the crime, involving under-age persons in such offences, or if the crime is organized ahead of time. The third part of this article (article: 113.3) talks about being sentenced to prison for ten to fifteen years if (a) the crime was committed repeatedly, (b) a person was trafficked across an international border, (c) the crime was committed by an organized group, or (d) the victim suffered an injury.⁶³

Prostitution and pornography are regulated under the Law Against Pornography, which came into force in July 1998. This law defines pornography as including prostitution, the exploitation of prostitution, and organizing, mediating, and promoting prostitution (Article 3.1.2). Under Article 13.2.1, persons engaging in prostitution shall have their income from such activities confiscated and be subject to 14-30 days detention. Persons who organize, mediate, or promote prostitution shall be fined MNT 35,000-50,000 (approximately USD 30- 43) or detained for 7-15 days, and any organization (i.e., legal entity) involved in such activities shall be fined MNT 100,000-250,000 (approximately USD 87-217). In addition, any hotel, bar, or other location knowingly

⁶⁰ NHRCM and CHRD, 2002, op.cit, p.11.

⁶¹ Mongolian Criminal Law (old), 1986.

⁶² NHRCM and CHRD, 2002, op.cit, p.11.

⁶³ Ibid, p.11.

used for the purpose of prostitution shall be closed, and any vehicle knowingly used to facilitate prostitution, shall be confiscated. However, there is no punishment for persons who buy sexual services.)⁶⁴

2.5.5 Protection by the Government

During the period of this study, the government referred 18 victims to an NGO shelter. The NGO reported assisting these victims, and identifying and assisting an additional 61 victims not identified by the government, most of whom were referred from friends and family members of victims. The government did not demonstrate use of systematic procedures to proactively identify victims of trafficking among vulnerable groups, such as women detained for involvement in prostitution, or migrant labourers returning from abroad, and did not maintain statistics on the number of trafficking victims identified by authorities. The government did not even provide any specialized training to officials on victim identification. Victims were sometimes punished for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked, such as being prosecuted on prostitution charges. Officials did not refer trafficking victims to appropriate services. Moreover, the government did not run any shelters for victims of trafficking, nor did it provide direct assistance to Mongolian trafficking victims repatriated from other countries or foreign victims of trafficking identified in Mongolia. The government provided US \$10,000 to the National Center Against Violence, which primarily sheltered domestic violence victims and also sometimes sheltered trafficking victims. The government also provided one NGO with US \$3,000 to counsel and assist children vulnerable to trafficking. Although the government encouraged victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking offenders, Mongolian law continued to lack protection provisions for victims who served as prosecution witnesses, which put victims in great danger. The Mongolian government provided legal alternatives to the removal of foreign victims to countries where they faced retribution or hardship.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Asia foundation, “Combating human trafficking in Mongolia: issues and opportunities”, Ulaanbaatar, at <http://asiafoundation.org/pdf/Mongolia-trafficking.pdf>

⁶⁵ “Human trafficking in Mongolia” at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking_in_Mongolia

Since Mongolia has joined many international agreements and conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention Against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it has a responsibility to fight against and prevent the crime of women's trafficking. This provides some hope for improving activities against this crime all over the world.⁶⁶

2.6 Role of Women NGOs to combat violence against women

“Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture.”⁶⁷ Violence is an obstacle to development and hinders progress in achieving development targets. Violence against women has been recognized as a global concern thanks to the work of many organizations and evidence based research. However, despite the growing recognition of violence against women as a public health and human rights concern, it is still estimated that one in every five women faces some form of violence during her lifetime.⁶⁸ Violence against women takes many different forms including; physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence and partner violence. It can be overt but sometimes it may also be very subtle. That is what we have witnessed in the case of Mongolia also.

There is a substantial body of research and information compiled globally on the scope, tendencies, and harms of violence against women. However, in Mongolia, information of this kind is very scarce. This does not mean that violence against women does not exist in Mongolia. In fact, the Government has officially acknowledged the

⁶⁶ NHRCM and CHRD, 2002, op.cit, p.6.

⁶⁷ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, paragraph 112; cited in “Combating Violence Against Women in Mongolia”, The Centre for Citizens’ Alliance CCA, in collaboration with the National Centre Against Violence and the Centre for Human Rights and Development, 2008.

⁶⁸ WHO, Addressing violence against women and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, 2005; cited in “Combating Violence Against Women in Mongolia”, The Centre for Citizens’ Alliance CCA, in collaboration with the National Centre Against Violence and the Centre for Human Rights and Development, 2008.

objective existence of violence against women in Mongolia as far back as in 1996.⁶⁹ Women's groups remained active at that time in using the information they produced for advocacy and awareness creation. Many women lawyers mobilized within NGOs to draft new legislation and introduced new amendments to existing laws. For example, a draft law on domestic violence was prepared by the NCAV and the Mongolian Women Lawyers Association (MWLA) for submission to the Parliament. In addition, the Family Law also included a provision that "the marriage of the couple shall be dissolved without giving any probation period, in case if one of the married couple proved to be imposed any form of violence or keeping the spouse under permanent pressure or violence that threatened the other's life, health condition and abused the children."⁷⁰

Significantly, the National Centre against Violence was involved in working effectively in the areas of public service, advocacy, information dissemination, and raising public awareness. It conducted training and advocacy campaigns using press and mass media based on their materials and using new methodologies. A Family Education Centre was established at the NCAV, which networked with public institutions, non-governmental organizations and enforcement agencies working in the area of halting domestic violence against women and children.⁷¹

In order to use CEDAW as a key human rights instrument to make the government more accountable, in 1997, the Mongolian government prepared its third periodic report for the Committee on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was to be considered in January 2001.⁷² The National CEDAW Watch Network Centre was established in 1998 to monitor and evaluate the government's fulfillment of their obligations under the CEDAW Convention. It prepared reports on government action, lobbied government to improve its

⁶⁹ NPAW, Government of Mongolia, (1996), pp. 36-41; cited in "Combating Violence Against Women in Mongolia", The Centre for Citizens' Alliance CCA, in collaboration with the National Centre Against Violence and the Centre for Human Rights and Development, 2008.

⁷⁰ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), op.cit, p.22.

⁷¹ Ibid, p.22.

⁷² National CEDAW Watch Network Centre (NCWNC), (2000), *Implementation of the Mongolian National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Women*. Ulaanbaatar: NCWNC.

performance and conducted general community training on CEDAW. It also prepared a Shadow Report to CEDAW for 2001 to submit at the same time as the Mongolian government report to the CEDAW Committee. Violence against women was one of the three aspects covered in the Shadow Report. As part of the preparation of this report, it collected material on violence against women and provided training to NGOs on the reporting process, apart from preparing contents of the CEDAW Convention.⁷³ The report was expected to be used as a tool for government to become more aware and more accountable for the implementation of CEDAW and upholding women's rights.

The National Population Policy (1996) and the National Programme for the Advancement of Women proposed concrete action plans to combat violence against women. At the closing decade of 1990, the working group of the National Council on Women's Issues evaluated the activities carried out vis-à-vis violence against women and recommended revising the objectives set in 1996 and improving some provisions.⁷⁴ However, the issue of violence against women has not made much headway within the mainstream institutions and organizations, whose decision-making instances are male-dominated, even when women constitute the majority of middle management. There are very few or no government activities to address the issue of violence against women, whether at the policy-making or implementation level. While the draft law on domestic violence "has been developed with wide community consultation ... the NGOs have not been able to secure more than limited parliamentary support".⁷⁵ According to a UNIFEM report of 2001, "rehabilitation services for women who experienced violence are limited; educational campaigns for zero tolerance against any form of violence towards women have had minimal impact".⁷⁶

⁷³ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), p.22.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.22.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.23.

⁷⁶ Government of Mongolia,(1999b), *Social Sector Issues and Strategies*. Ulaanbaatar; cited in United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition: A Report*, Prepared by Nalini Burn and Oyuntsetseg Oidov.

The above discussions show the real situation of women in Mongolian society until the 2000. In sum, it can be said that across the spectrum of issues on a rights-based development agenda, the main constraint in achieving outcomes is the implementation capacity, even when the legislative framework is in place. But in the area of violence against women, to which all women are exposed, the legislative framework is still lacking in Mongolia.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC STATUS OF MONGOLIAN WOMEN

Chapter 3

Economic Status of Mongolian Women

The post-Cold War changes which characterise the world economy during the last two decades or so such as globalization, structural adjustment, economic transition, liberalization, privatization and technological innovation had directly affected Mongolian economy as well as women's life in both positive and negative ways (Morris and Bruun: 2005). Various forms of ownership emerging since 1990 not only became a part of Mongolian people's life but also brought lot of changes in the employment structure of the country. In the past, Mongolia has had many cases of women playing a major role in the economy due to their educational and professional capability. However, during the last few years the share of women in economic activity has got a tendency to decline and therefore women's participation in the labour market is obviously lower as opposed to men's.¹ Women are increasingly becoming a subject of dismissal and there is evidence of women exposed to unsafe and unhealthy labour environment by being forced to do mostly manual and low paid work which does not require professional skills. This chapter examines whether such a situation existed during the period between 1991 and 2000.

3.1 Impact of Economic Transition on Mongolian Women

In 1990, Mongolia embarked on economic transition from a socialist planned to a free market economy. This transition resulted in significant social and economic changes in the lives of Mongolian citizens.² However, the transition to a free market economy has not been an easy process as the country underwent major reforms. Some major reform measures were the liberalization of main domestic markets and international trade, free currency float, and privatization of state owned enterprises. At the start of the transition between 1990 and 1994, the economy experienced sharp decline and income was

¹. P. Altansetseg, "Globalization and its impact on women's life: Women's education on employment and income generation issues", at <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/35508954/Globalization-and-its-impact-on-womens-life>

². Odgerel Dashzeveg (2012), "Women's Well-being in Pre and Post-transitional Mongolia", Women's Studies Research Center at <http://www.brandeis.edu/wsrc/research/docs/spring2012.pdf>

abruptly dropped. The sign of economic stabilization started from 1995 and until the year 2000 economy grew constantly but did not reach the pre-1990 level. Yet, inflation controlled private sector started developing fast (UNIFEM, 2001).

On the other hand, poverty and related social discrepancies resulting from the decade-long transition were not significantly reducing. The increasing disparities between urban and rural, rich and poor posed significant challenges to the social structure of the country. The quality of the basic social services such as education and healthcare were not improving. Because of the huge environmental challenges such as draught and *zud* (harsh winter), degradation of pastureland, desertification, climate changes, economic growth could not contribute much to the reduction of poverty (UNDP: 2000). Further, the 1999 winter hazards resulted in the decline of agricultural production so much so that the GDP growth was only 1.1 percent in 2000.

The transition period also posed many challenges in clearly defining position of women in the society due to social attitudes based on traditions, customs and stereotypes of women. Collapse of Mongolia's entire social, political and economic system in the early 1990s resulted in the turmoil of lives of all population without any exception. Closure of state owned industries due to economic crisis and structural adjustment in all sectors led to the reduction of workplaces in general and high rates of unemployment in particular. Many women were dismissed mainly from the medium and junior level positions. According to a survey conducted by the TCEDAWWNC in 1999 on 300 people involved in informal business, 30.2 per cent of female respondents and 17.6 per cent of male respondents were forced to work in this extremely insecure sector because of retirement, structural adjustment, manager's attitude and also because of their gender.

Another important factor that had adverse effect on women's employment pattern was massive closure of state-owned childcare facilities. During the period of 1990-1996, the number of childcare centers was dropped from 441 to 38. Day care premises were privatized for use of other purposes such as bars, restaurants or business entities. Additionally, deterioration of day care services, particularly food and childcare activities, affected parental willingness to send their children to childcare. The idea of bringing up

children in the social institutions was discredited after failure of socialist system when parents preferred to bring their children within the family. All these factors pushed women, particularly women under 35, to be engaged mainly in the unpaid and undervalued work as childcare and housekeeping that further estranged them from the public sphere.

Overall economic crisis in the country was combined with the growth of new private and informal sectors in economy. Such newly established entities and organizations suffered from weak economic and organizational structure and lack of managerial skills. They usually showed low respect for the law. Having limited possibilities or willingness to improve work conditions employers established their own arbitrary policies in employment. On the other hand, state had no strong working mechanism for the implementation of the law and control over these newly mushroomed entities. According to a survey conducted by the Mongolian Women Lawyers' Association (MWLA)³ on the results of the 5 years of criminal court judgments, no employer was punished for the unlawful dismissal of pregnant or breast feeding women. This fact manifests that such claims were adjudicated only according to the Civil Code. Women mainly remained out of jobs. Another survey conducted by the National CEDAW Watch Network in 1999 shows that 65.6 per cent of the female respondents employed in the informal sector said that jobs would not be stable as this depends exclusively on the personal opinion of employer and unstable socio-economic and political situation in the country.

Discriminative trends of not recruiting women on the grounds of gender that were flourishing under the previous system were reinforced during the transition period as well. Women as a weak sex were seen as auxiliary labour force in the public sphere. According to traditions, women's role in the household was seen as more important and their potential contribution to the development of society was underestimated. Proverb like "women's hair is long and mind is short" was a bright manifestation of cultural stereotypes predominating the Mongolian society. This attitude was spread widely in

³. The Mongolian Women Lawyers' Association was founded in 1992 to protect the rights of women, particularly the rights of women lawyers, and providing all Mongolian women with legal aid.

folks, films and was cultivated through mass media. Main gender stereotypes affecting women's employment were related to childbearing and childrearing responsibilities that were considered as solely women's responsibility. This was reinforced by the law that reflected the cultural attitudes of Mongolia's transitional society. According to the Labour Code of Mongolia (1999), only mothers are entitled to childcare leave, fathers receive such leave only if they are single.⁴ Statistics clearly show that women constituted 89.2 per cent of all people engaged in childcare and 72.6 per cent looked after elderly, disabled and sick. While compared to men (27.7 per cent), women (72.3 per cent) could not take jobs because of work peculiarities of their spouses.⁵

Double burden of women as they were engaged in paid employment and work more hours in the household was explained by social attitude that considers household activities as women's responsibility. For example, rural women in general work 6 hours more in the household compared to their spouses, while urban women do so 3 hours more.⁶ Common social attitude to women as a weak sex was shown in the protectionist legislation towards them. Apart from prohibition of certain high paid jobs for women they retire 5 years earlier than men. In addition, cultural attitudes restrict women's political participation as political activity was seen as men's prerogative. Their membership in political parties, particularly in the top management bodies, was significantly lower than men's. After 1996 parliamentary elections discriminative trend for recruitment of politically loyal employees at all levels, including both private and public sectors, began to affect women more than men. Many women were dismissed during this period from medium and junior level posts for being non-partisan. Similarly women had fewer opportunities for promotion at job.⁷ Stereotype of women worker and men manager was revealed in low opportunities for women to get professional training, retraining, advanced training or leadership training.

⁴ Article 105 (1) and (2), Labour Code of Mongolia (1999).

⁵ National Statistical Office of Mongolia, (1998), cited in Elizabeth Morris (2001), *The Informal Sector in Mongolia: Profiles, Needs and Strategies*, Bangkok: ILO.

⁶ Elizabeth Morris and Ole Bruun (2005), *Promoting employment opportunities in rural Mongolia: Past experience and ILO approaches*, Bangkok: ILO, p. 175.

⁷ Ibid.

Training was organized mainly for leadership from which women remained excluded. On the other hand, women's enormous workload in the household, child rearing and childbearing, caring after elderly, disabled and sick prevented them from being involved in training. Financial constraints affected women more as they earned less than men did. In general, women had less opportunity for study and self-development.

It has been discovered that in Mongolia, practices in recruitment for any job are mainly built upon personal links, acquaintances, political affiliation, bribery or gender of a potential candidate for employment rather than his/her professional abilities, skills and experience. In a survey conducted by the Liberal Women's Brain Pool (LEOS)⁸ among 260 urban and rural women 38 per cent of respondents stated that support for promotion of women to management position was at medium level, 22.3 per cent stated that no support was provided at all, 24.2 per cent stated that the issue was being considered and 10.7 per cent did not reply. On the question as to what factors were limiting women's social participation, 30.3 per cent replied social attitude, 29.6 per cent said lack of self-confidence, 17.6 per cent stressed on double burden of work and family, 13.8 per cent said affiliation to a political party, 13 per cent replied economic capability and 9.6 per cent was in favour of lack of professional experience.

Another survey conducted by the National CEDAW Watch Network Centre in 1999 showed that 54.3 per cent of female respondents could not get benefits from the social insurance funds while 43.2 per cent could not get maternity and childcare benefit. Population in general had no experience in struggle against violations of human rights. Especially women, being less exposed to public sphere, suffered from lack of such knowledge. They were more passive in demanding their rights compared to men. Trade Unions and few human rights organizations lacked experience and were limited in their activities.⁹

⁸ LEOS was established on October 20, 1992 in the capital city of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar. The main objectives of LEOS are to promote the development of democracy, respect for women's rights as human rights, to promote the economic development of rural women in Mongolia and Mongolian society as a whole, and to promote individual freedom and pluralism in Mongolia.

⁹ UNDP/ GOM, (2007), "Employment and Poverty in Mongolia" at http://www.forum.mn/res_mat/nhdr2007.pdf

3.2 Mongolian Women in the Formal Economy

During the transition to an open-market economy, privatization, retrenchment and structural adjustment had been disproportionately borne by the Mongolian women. In 1997, women made up 49.8 per cent of the economically active population and 49.7 per cent of the employed work force (NSO, 1998). Gender bias in the division of labour between women and men in different sectors of the formal economy was more pronounced. Male workers predominated the formal economy sectors as identified by the Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EGSPRS), for example, mining and extraction, energy, construction of infrastructure, and the transport sector. The gender balance was more equitable in the agriculture sector. Women formed the majority of the workforce only in the processing and tourism sectors (hotel, restaurant) where seasonal work predominates, and many were concentrated in sectors that were contracting or that remained static, for example, health and social services and education.¹⁰

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank and World Bank, (2005), *Country Gender Assessment: Mongolia*, East and Central Asia Regional Department and Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Manila, Philippines.

Table 5: Female Employment by Sectors in Mongolia (1997)

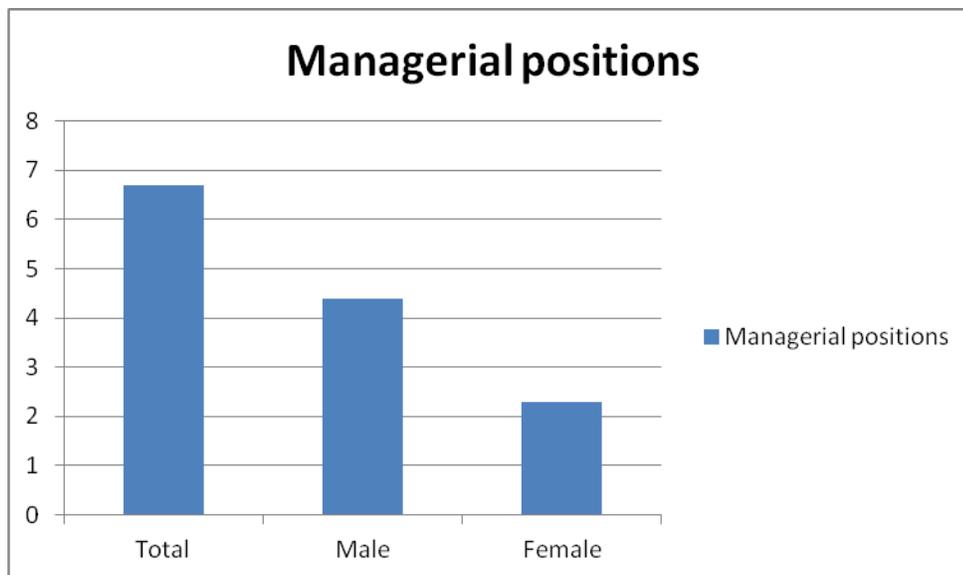
Sectors	Percentage	
	Male	Female
Agriculture and hunting	53.2	46.8
Mining	69.7	30.3
Hotels and catering	20.2	79.8
Education	33.7	66.3
Health and social services	35.1	64.9
Financial institutions	38.8	61.2
Trade (wholesale and retail)	45.8	54.2
Public services	49.7	50.3
Real estate	55	45.0
Civil services and armed forces	57.6	42.4
Electricity and natural gas	65.1	34.9
Construction	60.4	39.6
Telecommunications and transport	61.5	38.5
Industry processing	58.8	41.2

Source: National Statistical Office of Mongolia, 1998.

Despite their higher educational levels, there was a persistent wage gap between men and women. In 2000, Women earned an average 8 per cent less than men (Robinson and Solongo, 2000). Salary levels were higher in sectors like mining and transportation that were predominated by men. Furthermore, despite lower levels of education and training, men held significantly higher proportion of managerial positions even where there were high concentrations of female workers. For example, there were few women school principals, although women made up 75 per cent of the educational workforce.¹¹

¹¹Selim Jahan and N. Batnasan, (2007), Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, Poverty Research and Employment Facilitation for Policy Development, UNDP Project, Ulaanbaatar.

Figure 1: Employees Holding Managerial Positions by Sex in Mongolia (2000)



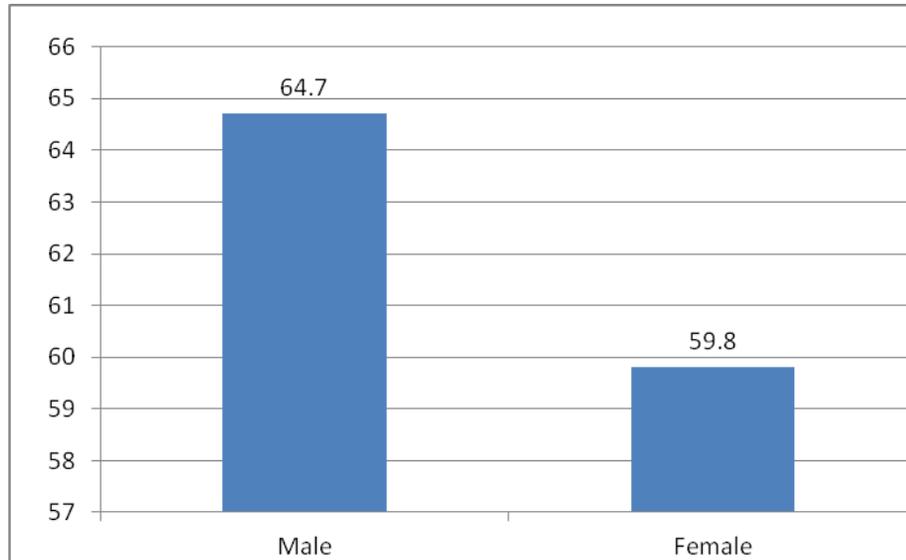
Source: Compiled from Sample Survey of Employees in Enterprises and Organizations, NSO, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

According to the NSO survey, the salaries of men in managerial positions were almost twice of those women working in the same positions. There was also some evidence that men received higher salaries for the same jobs and levels despite prohibitions against wage discrimination by sex under the labour law.¹² These wage disparities illustrated distortions and discrimination in the labour market that undermined the potential contributions that woman could make as half the workforce. These gaps also represented poor returns on the extra investment in women's education.

¹² Analysis presented in draft study by the Mongolian Statistical Association in 2004 *Gender and Poverty Analysis of the Public Budget in the Employment Sector* for UNDP; cited in Country Gender Assessment: Mongolia, East and Central Asia Regional Department and Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Asian Development Bank and World Bank, Manila, Philippines 2005.

Figure 2: Average Monthly Salary by Sex in Mongolia, 2000

(In thous.Tg)



Source: NSO, 2003. “Labour force and salary”, Ulaanbaatar; cited in “The Human Development Textbook” Poverty Research and Employment Facilitation for Policy Development UNDP Project, Ulaanbaatar, 2007

In 2003, Mongolia’s National Statistical Office conducted a school-to-work transition survey (SWTS). Its statistical analysis was done by the ILO which after examining gender wage differentials found that the average female wages were not lower than male wages. However, there was a clear sign of discriminating behaviour against women since they possessed characteristics that would otherwise lead to higher productivity than men. By decomposing the gender wage differential the analysis concluded that if women and men were equally paid, the wages of women should be 11.7 per cent higher.

The Labour Law of Mongolia had explicit provisions to protect against discrimination based on age or sex. An apparent exception was the provision of the Labour Law setting the retirement age of women at 55 versus 60 for men. Under the Pension Law as amended in 1990 women with four or more children can retire early with

a pension to provide “social care.” While this was supposed to be done with agreement of the employee, the provision made women vulnerable to being “retired” without their consent. As pensions were often insufficient to make ends meet, retired women often sought work elsewhere.¹³

Women carry a double burden with responsibilities at work and at home. The labour force survey conducted during 1997–1999 asked all respondents about non-economic activities and unpaid work. The survey showed that 92 per cent of the population aged 15 years and older participated in activities such as cooking, cleaning, washing and caring for children and elders. Just over half of them were women, spending an average 25 hours a week on these activities. In rural areas, women devoted twice as many hours to non-economic activities as men, i.e., 37 hours compared to 19 hours respectively. The number of hours on these activities was longer in winter (30 hours) than in other seasons – spring (25 hours), summer (22 hours) and autumn (22 hours) (NHDR: 2007).

¹³Elizabeth Morris, (2001), *The informal sector in Mongolia: Profiles, needs, and strategies*, Bangkok, International Labour Office.

Table 6: Pre-School Institutions in Mongolia (In Select Years)

Pre-school institutions	1990	1995	2000
Creches	33100	8600	1900
Kindergartens	92200	64100	79300

Source: Compiled from NSO, *Mongolian Statistical Yearbook*, 1999, 2001 and 2006, Ulaanbaatar, cited in *National Human Development Report of Mongolia*, 2007.

During transition period, the Government restored the number of children attending kindergarten to a higher level than in the socialist era, which was an impressive achievement. However, at the same time, the number of very young children being cared for in creches were very low, posing a direct obstacle to labour force participation for many mothers (NHDR: 2007).

3.3 Labour Rights and Mongolian Women

The transition period posed numerous challenges in clearly defining position of Mongolian men and women in the labour market. Women received far less property than men during the privatization but they also started their private businesses despite the fact that they were exposed to more risks in using equal opportunities in the labour market. Due to the labour market irregulation, investment returns in women's education had been slow, thus reducing their contribution to the economic growth. The weakening of the day-care institutions for pre-school children during the transition period was also one of the factors to adversely influence the capacity of women in competing freely in the labour market. Reduction in production and real budget, income decline, increase of living cost hit hard women than men.

According to the Law on Employment Support, a fund for employment support was established and designed at financing certain type of entities and activities: to give

incentives to employers who provided job for those who were not able to find job through mediation; to guarantee loan with low interest rate to those who work collectively or individually, self-employed, create new work place for unemployed; and to finance measures and services aimed at job mediation, providing professional skills and information. Nevertheless, there was a lack of official legal explanation and recommendation elaborating discrimination and favouritism as well as the principle of open competition which in turn could deny or violate equality in the labour relations or work and profession and employment sector.

Though the proportion of labour force participation of women saw a modest increase, in general labour force participation of men was higher than that of women. According to sex and age segregation, labour force participation of women between the ages of 30-49 was relatively higher than men's participation and in other age categories women's participation is relatively lower than men's. In particular, the low proportion of labour force participation of women between the ages of 16-29 indicates that women in this age studied more than men. It is also connected that women over 50 years old retired for pension.

Table 7: Female Labour Force Participation Rate in Mongolia

(In percentage)

Year	Total Labour Force	Female Participation
1993	74.5	72.3
1994	73.9	88.1
1995	70.8	82.7
1996	69.9	69.3
1997	68.6	68.5

Source: compiled from National Statistical Office of Mongolia, 1998; cited in B. Robinson and A. Solongo, "The Gender Dimension of Economic Transition in Mongolia", 2000.

But the proportion of men employment was higher than that of women in the such fields as mining, prospecting industry, electricity production, water supply services, transportation, communication, construction, administrative management, defense, formal insurance sector. Gender gap was seen in the amount of average salary owing to the fact that men formed majority in the high paid economic activities and women formed majority in the less paid services sector.¹⁴

3.4 Unemployment and Mongolian Women

Sharp increases in unemployment had been a strident feature of the transition. In 2000, unemployment rate was found to be 4.1per cent for male and 5per cent for female. For both sexes, it has been gradually increasing since 1997.¹⁵ In the year 1997 itself, 7.6 percent¹⁶ people registered as unemployed of whom 7.8 percent¹⁷ were women (Robinson and Solongo, 2000). Female unemployment rate was always slightly higher than male.¹⁸ Since phenomenon like unemployment and poverty became new social issues giving serious influence especially on women, the privatization of factories and other economic enterprises as well as an overall decline in production and the shift of economic activity to trading resulted in an increasing unemployment rate among women. They became the first workers to be laid off and what was witnessed was that after losing their jobs, opportunities for them were limited due to their low levels of education apart from carrying the burden of running households.¹⁹

However, unemployment rates varied a great deal, depending upon how they were to be measured. Government rates have always been based on the number who registers at local government employment offices every 3 months. These rates represented 4 per cent (5 per cent female and 4 per cent male in 2000) of those seeking work. In 2000, all people who had not worked at least 1 hour in the week before the census and who said that they were looking for work were counted as unemployed. That measure yielded a

¹⁴ Government of Mongolia, combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee of UN, 2007.

¹⁵ JICA, (2002), Women in Development (WID) profile- Mongolia.

¹⁶ NSO, 1998

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ JICA, (2002), op.cit.

¹⁹ JICA, (2002). Op.cit.

rate of 17 per cent (18 per cent male and 17 per cent female).²⁰ Census and official unemployment statistics in Mongolia are based on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) data which since 1993 has included production data for pay and profit as well as for private consumption. This is important for understanding gender gaps in employment since women’s unpaid domestic labour in production for private consumption is now included in the system of national accounts (SNA).²¹

Table 8: Unemployment Rate in Mongolia, 1993-97 (Per Thousand)

Year	Per cent	
	Male	Female
1993	9.4	8.6
1994	10	7.9
1995	6.1	4.8
1996	7.1	6.8
1997	8.1	7.8

Source: compiled from National Statistical Office of Mongolia, 1998; cited in B. Robinson and A. Solongo, “The Gender Dimension of Economic Transition in Mongolia”, 2000.

But women’s contributions to family care and reproduction are not included and only become evident in time-use surveys. This distinction is important when calculating unemployment rates based on a proportion of economically active individuals. Many women report that they are fully occupied in domestic or reproductive work but fail to recognize how these activities contribute to production for private consumption and to the market. They are, therefore, not counted in the economically active category. Women’s reproductive activities cannot be readily separated from subsistence or other production,

²⁰ 2000 Population and Housing Census; cited in Mongolia: Country Gender Assessment, (2005), East and Central Asia Regional Department and Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Asian Development Bank and World Bank, Manila, Philippines.

²¹ The System of National Accounts (SNA) is the internationally agreed standard set of recommendations on how to compile measures of economic activity. The SNA describes a coherent, consistent and integrated set of macroeconomic accounts in the context of a set of internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications and accounting rules.

and this in turn leads to underestimating their economic contributions and hence their unemployment or underemployment in official statistics is based on GDP.

3.5 Poverty and Mongolian Women

With increasing consequences of the transition, there were more unresolved problems for women in the Mongolian society. The most common indicator of women's income poverty became the number of female headed poor households. Women were more prone to the unemployment and poverty, in particular the life of women headed family with many children was difficult (UNDP, 1996). Among the poor the proportion of those who got pensions and lived on welfare benefits were high. Though social welfare allowances and pension was increased in terms of inflation it could not compensate the increase of the price of basic consumer goods. Therefore, it caused the poverty to increase. Those who had extended family and had low education were more exposed to poverty (Morris and Bruun, 2005). While economic growth is central to reducing poverty, social protection policy and programmes can also help the vulnerable. These include promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing exposure to risks, and enhancing citizen's abilities to protect themselves against hazards and interruption or loss of income.²² However, these were not properly integrated into Mongolian economy during the transition period.

3.5.1 Government Initiatives to Eradicate Poverty

Though Government had been implementing a number of programmes and projects in the social welfare sector, poverty and unemployment remained most contentious issues. During the implementation of National Program on Advancement of the Women's situation between 1996 and 2002, many positive developments such as ensuring women's rights, improving their education level and reproductive health, establishing a system to ensure women's development took place. During the implementation of the national program on poverty reduction for the period 1996-2000, additional small projects for women, especially those who headed households, gave

²² Social Security Sector Strategic Document, MSWL, (2003); cited in Government of Mongolia, combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee of UN, 2007, p.26.

positive support to improve their livelihood. Yet, both in urban and rural areas women's poverty, particularly among those who headed households lacked resources.²³

Following the economic transition, poverty incidence among women had increased and both the poverty and unemployment became conspicuous. According to statistical data, the female unemployment rate tends to be lower than male, but it was found that more women were entering into informal sector or staying at home, facing the difficulties to continue to work in the formal sector having lost universal access to nursery services.

Besides, the National Poverty Alleviation Program (NPAP)²⁴ included a micro credit program for poverty reduction among women. But overall the government and the society had been slow to acknowledge the existence of the gender gap, which had gone up following transition. Consequently, there was only a few research and study done with regard to gender in Mongolia and there existed no national machinery or government measures regarding gender related problems.²⁵

3.6 Social Safety Net

The formal social safety net included targeted consumer subsidies, particularly for shelter and heating, targeted allowances (unemployment and child allowances), and social insurance (pensions). The new system for social protection was prescribed in the Social Insurance Law enacted in 1995 and in the Social Assistance Law enacted in 1996. In addition, public works programmes, emergency assistance, retraining of the unemployed, and enterprise promotion (including microfinance schemes) had been introduced through the NPAP and other projects. The social insurance system covered the

²³, Government of Mongolia, combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee of UN, 2007, p.26.

²⁴ The National Poverty Alleviation Program (1994-2000) was launched in 1994 with the main target of decreasing poverty incidence from 26 percent in 1994 to 10 percent in 2000. The NPAP considered both economic and social aspects of poverty. Its more specific objectives are the following: 1) poverty reduction through economic growth and employment promotion; 2) human resource development through improvement of education and health services; 3) mitigation of the poverty situation facing women; 4) establishment of a social safety net; 5) poverty reduction in rural areas; and 6) strengthening organizational capacity and policy development. The Poverty Alleviation Program Office (PAPO), the secretariat of NPAC, with its regional offices, is in charge of the implementation of the program.

²⁵ Japan Bank for International Cooperation, (2001), Poverty Profile, Executive Summary: Mongolia, p.6.

Pension Insurance Fund, Benefits Insurance Fund, Work Injury Fund, Unemployment Fund and Health Insurance Fund. The largest fund was the Pension Insurance Fund and that the government took measures towards pension reform by planning to introduce a partly self-financing system to increase the resource for the fund (Thompson, 1998). Under the 1995 Social Insurance Law, both employers and employees were required to contribute to these funds except the Work Injury Fund, with an expected contribution rate of 29 to 31 per cent of employee wages.

Though the government provided social assistance for those who were identified as vulnerable (the disabled, single parents of large families, and the very poor defined as receiving less than 40 percent of the minimum wage), this did not meet the needs of the poor. According to the World Bank report, only 16.4 per cent of the poorest, most of whom lived in the Mongolian capital city of Ulaanbaatar, benefited from the assistance in some way or the other.²⁶

3.7 Mongolian Women in the Informal Sector

With shrinking employment and income in the formal sector, the number of women and men who set up businesses and sought for employment in the informal sector began increasing despite the fact that the informal sector was typically marred by low incomes, long hours, unsafe and poor conditions of work. It was in fact left outside the scope of regulations and legislation. Nonetheless, it offered employment and income to a large number of people including women.²⁷

As in many countries, women played a dominant role in Mongolia's informal economy also. According to the Employment Policy Support Project (EPSP) survey, 69 per cent of the workers were women. Share of employment by sector indicated that 62 per cent of employees were working in the retail trade, 32.6 per cent in the transport like taxi or truck drivers and 14.6 per cent in various other services. In addition, women made up a majority of the self-employed in the informal sector (54 per cent).²⁸ Single women

²⁶ Ibid. p.6.

²⁷ Bikales, Bill (et. al.), (2000), "The Mongolian Informal Sector: Survey Results and Analysis".

²⁸ GOM/USAID, (2000), The Mongolian Informal Sector: Survey Results and Analysis.

who were household heads looked to the informal sector for employment and income. But discriminatory provisions of labour law forced some women into early retirement without adequate pensions. A consensus of focus groups was that while many women had acquired higher education, they were becoming marginalized in the informal sector because of gender bias and insensitive policies (Tsengelmaa, 2000b).

Table 9: Situation of Urban Informal Sector in Mongolia (1998)

Sector	Sub- sectors	Share of employment (per cent)
Retail trade	Kiosks, counters, containers	50
Financial services	Pawnshops, money changers	1.2
Transport	Taxis, trucks, minibuses, garages	32.6
Services	cobblers, canteens, barbers, games, chemists, home-cooked meals	14.6
Manufacture	Baked goods, soft drinks	1.5
Total		100

Source: Government of Mongolia, Combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee of UN, 1999; cited in Country WID profile: Mongolia, Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, Women in Development (WID) Profile-Mongolia, November 2002.

**Table 10: Shares of Employment in the Urban Informal Sector by Sex
(1999)**

Sectors	Percentage	
	Male	Female
Retail trade	31	69
Financial services	23	77
Transport	98	2
Services	30	70
Manufacture	38	62
Total average	46	54

Source: Government of Mongolia, Combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee of UN, 1999; cited in Country WID profile: Mongolia, Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, Women in Development (WID) Profile-Mongolia, November 2002.

At the same time it was also true that unemployment and poverty forced women to go for work in informal sectors and unpaid household activities. Due to the lack of retraining unemployed women, low employment in private sector and decline in income, the interest of men and women to work in informal sector increased. However, different surveys showed different proportion of women employed in informal sector, such as 69, 54 and 45. Most of the retail traders did not pay for the social welfare and health insurance so women were in risky situation. Though women frequently faced difficult conditions in informal sector employment, the educational level of female was higher than that of males in Mongolia, with large numbers of women overqualified for jobs in the informal economy. It is, therefore, not surprising that many women working in the informal sector had enough education, skills and experience that were considered to be inappropriate for the opportunities in the formal sector. Thus, a mismatch of skills resulted in underutilized labour (Morris, 2001).

In addition, they also faced disadvantages and obstacles such as inadequate credit and family obligations, imposing limitations on the types of activities that women could

select to obtain employment and income.²⁹ Women were placed at a disadvantage during the transition from state ownership to private property when assets formerly owned by the State, including livestock and housing, were registered in the names of household heads who were predominantly men. This left women without collateral for loans or credit unless they obtained permission from the man who headed the household, hampering their ability to start-up and expand business and making it more likely that women were forced to operate in the informal economy rather than the formal sector.³⁰ Since lack of capital limited the choice of business, women played a dominant role in retail trade both as street vendors and in personal services.

3.8 Mongolian Women's Economic Contribution in Rural Areas

Nomadic households in Mongolia played a part in the productive and reproductive economies and rights and responsibilities within the households were differentiated by gender. While traditional nomadic herding maintained clear distinctions between men's and women's work marked by a mix of cooperation and specialization, the emergence of privatization had blurred some of the role distinctions with more women taking on work that traditionally was perceived to be in the male domain.³¹ Privatization also provided opportunities to increase herd size and expand milk processing, which in turn resulted in more work for women.³² Although the volume of paid and unpaid productive work that is regarded as women's responsibility had increased, some traditional work divisions were strictly maintained. As a result of this flexibility, in some work activities women took on men's work and in others due to continuing rigidity women's tasks remained theirs alone despite an increase in workload, which resulted in intensifying the overall work load for the women (UNIFEM, 2001).

²⁹ Government of Mongolia, United Nations, (CEDAW), (2007), op.cit.

³⁰ Common Country Assessment: Mongolia, United Nations Country Team, Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 2005 at http://www.undp.mn/publications/CCA_final_2007-2011.pdf

³¹ UNESCO, (1990), A Country Report on *the Status of Women in Mongolia*, prepared by Dr B. Dolgormaa, S. Zmambaga and L. Ojungerel.

³² United Nations, (2005), "Rural women and food security in Asia and the Pacific: Prospects and paradoxes", Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand.

3.9 Discrimination against Mongolian Women

Discrimination by gender is one of the major problems faced by women in employment, which was true during the period of this study also.

3.1 High Rate of Unemployment among Women

According to the data issued by the State Statistical Office of Mongolia in 1998, women constituted 49.7 per cent of the working age population, 49.7 per cent of the economically active population and 46.7 per cent of employed population. However, they constituted 52.2 per cent among the unemployed population (GOM: 2003). Women's labour force participation rate dropped to 68.5 per cent and employment population ratio to 63.2 per cent. These figures constantly decreased during the preceding five years. For example, women's employment population ratio dropped from 67.6 per cent in 1992 to 60.5 per cent in 1998. Although the number of working age women increased by 1.4 per cent each year in the five year period (1992-1998), the number of employed women decreased by 1.2 per cent in 1995 and by 16.7 per cent in 1996. Even in 1998, the situation was similar. Overall unemployment increased by 14.9 per cent but women's unemployment increased by 16 per cent. Statistical data shows that women's unemployment rate had been constantly higher than men's during the transition period and that majority of unemployed women were women aged between 16 and 39. According to 1998 statistics, men's unemployment rate was 5.2 per cent, but women's was 6.4 per cent.³³

Another form of gender discrimination is discrimination associated with age and physical appearance. Numerous advertisements on job vacancies requiring smart appearance (being tall and pretty) were dispersed through media, particularly those related to jobs in services. For example, an advertisement published in the central newspaper read that "smart women of 18-25 age, height no less than 165 centimeters are

³³ Baseline Report to the IWRAW- Asia Pacific, "Implementation of Mongolian Women's Employment Rights".

invited to apply for the positions of shop assistants and bar waiters.” Such provisions did not apply for men.³⁴

3.2 Impact of Privatization and Structural Adjustment on Women

Many people of working age, physically fit and willing to work were forced to retire due to structural adjustment and privatization. The majority of them were women who were pushed to retirement because they gave birth to four and more children which meant that the retirement age was reduced to 45 or lower. Some of these women were even aged.³⁶ They were entitled to only tiny compensation and according to data for the Bayanzurkh district of Ulaanbaatar city about 80 per cent of all recipients were women. In the sectors where women’s participation was high, namely trade, services, light industry and education, women made majority among the job losers due to structural adjustment. For example, out of 109 persons, who lost jobs of teachers in the Bayanzurkh district of Ulaanbaatar city during restructuring in the education sector, 72 or 66 per cent were women. This was the situation in only one site. According to statistical data, during 1992 to 1995, whereas the number of men among those who lost jobs constituted 37 percent, women constituted much more, i.e., 63 per cent (Robinson, 1999).

3.3 Lower Position of Women in Employment

Women in general worked at junior and middle auxiliary positions and were concentrated in the lower income sectors of public and private sector. According to the data from the survey conducted by the WIRC in 1997, only 6.8 per cent of women employees were at top managerial positions, 43.8 per cent at middle positions and 49.1 per cent at auxiliary positions. The same survey demonstrated that among all public servants at the provincial level women constituted 39.6 per cent and men – 60.1 per cent, and at the senior managerial positions in the *aimag* governmental structures women made up 17.1 per cent and men – 82.9 per cent.³⁵ Women had not been promoted even in the

³⁴ Ibid, p. 5.

³⁵ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition: A Report*, Prepared by Nalini Burn and Oyuntsetseg Oidov.

sectors where they were traditionally dominated. Despite the fact that women employees constituted 70 per cent in the public education schools men dominated in the management and made up 90 per cent of all directors of schools.

Another evidence of gender discrimination was concentration of women in the low paid jobs. Women occupied lower positions in the job hierarchy and men occupied more prestigious jobs that offered higher pay. As women occupied lower positions in the job hierarchy their salaries were also less. Self-employed women with income of 20-50 thousands MNT constituted 67 per cent and men with the same income constituted 33 per cent. Another evidence of gender discrimination in the low paid jobs was that in the income of 200,000 MNT women constituted only 22 per cent compared to 78 per cent of men. This clearly shows that men prevailed in higher income jobs compared to women in the self-employed sector similar to the formal sector (Morris and Bruun, 2005).

Discrimination against women is revealed in job segregation as well. Men dominated in agriculture, industry, construction, transport and communications sectors where they constituted 54-63 per cent. Women prevailed in trade, services, education and health sectors where they made up 52-67 per cent. According to the Mongolian legislation women and men were to receive the same remuneration for the same work, but men received mainly higher pay and higher post jobs whereas women predominated at low pay, middle and auxiliary position. For example, 70 per cent of teachers and medical doctors and almost 100 per cent of workers of nurseries and childcare institutions were women. For the rural women the situation was even more difficult. Their working day lasted at least 12 hours but their labour had not been properly recognized for many years. They were excluded from rare social and cultural events, conferences and forums, which were attended mainly by men. Men also received almost all awards for the results of joint work. For example, among 518 participants of the conference of best herder's in October 1998 there were only 28 women (5.4 per cent).³⁶ This was due to the fact that

³⁶ U.N. Statistics Division, Social Indicators at <http://www.stopvaw.org/mongolia.html>.

men were supposed to take part in various meetings and receive awards, whereas women were to stay at home and perform their traditional housekeeping duties.

3.4 Less Recognition of Women's work in Public Sphere

Women had inadequately been rewarded by the State for results of their work. They had been less visible in the public sphere and their enormous work in the households had not been recognized. For example, the number of female "Heroes of Labour" was significantly lower than that of males. Women's workload was higher than of men's but rural male herders received more awards from the State in recognition of their work compared with urban women.

3.5 Reasons Prohibiting Mongolian Women for Employment

According to the Pension's legislation (1999) men aged 60, women aged 55, and women who gave birth to four or more children and who paid contributions for no less than 20 years into Pensions Fund are entitled to receive an old age pension. This legislation treats people of different sex in a different way and reflects traditional attitudes or the protectionist approach. Given the fact that size of the old age benefit is too low, majority of elderly cannot survive without support of children and suffer from poverty in a larger extent. Size of the benefit depends on the wages that an individual was earning before his/her retirement. As men occupy mainly senior positions with higher pay their pensions are also higher. Therefore, old women belong to one of the most vulnerable groups of population. Majority of retired women have to look after grandchildren and thus are locked in the private sphere, they continued to fulfill invisible household work and contribute to the household income. Similar was the case in the pre-2000 period. However, in the following paragraphs various reasons can be understood for preventing women to get employed in Mongolia during the period of this study.

- ***Women were prohibited from recruitment in many jobs with so called 'harmful and heavy work conditions'***. This provision adopted by the government seriously limited free choice of profession for women and prohibited all pregnant and non-pregnant women from taking employment. Men were allowed to get employed in all professions irrespective of work conditions and were well paid. But the government did not take

measures to improve safety at such workplaces in order to allow women to get employed there.

- ***Pregnant women were prohibited from work in conditions exposed to harmful chemical's poisons or cold or hot temperatures.*** No measures were taken to improve work conditions or providing those women with equally paid other kinds of work. Women were restricted from such jobs that usually paid better. This imposed serious restrictions on their free choice of work.
- ***Pregnant and child rearing women almost denied right to be hired.*** Such women were even dismissed for being “unsuitable” for business interests.
- ***Mothers did not receive an adequate maternity benefit.*** Motherhood was not seen as a work for the Mongolian society. The amount paid as maternity benefit was lower than their wage. Unemployed women who lived under poverty line received a tiny amount from the Social Welfare Fund. Women engaged in the informal sector, including herder women, were not entitled to any benefit for child bearing and child rearing. Almost all of them escaped from paying social insurance contributions. Women returning to a job after 2 years child care leave were denied to re-enter job despite provisions of the law that prohibited such refusals.
- ***Discriminative legislation was an example of laws, regulations, instructions reinforcing social stereotypes on what sort of jobs are suitable for women.*** Article 16 (11) of the Constitution³⁷ states that “men and women shall have equal rights in political, economic, social, cultural fields and in family affairs” and legislation says that both parents have equal rights and duties in bringing up their children. However, traditions that imposed child-rearing activities only on women remained still strong in the transitional Mongolian society. Moreover, Articles 80, 82, 83 of the existing Labour Code and Articles 100-108 of the new Labour Code³⁸ imply that women only have right to child care of new born children and children up to three years age, thus prohibiting dismissal of such mothers. Article 102 (1) states that pregnant woman and women with children of up

³⁷ Constitution of Mongolia, 1992.

³⁸ to come into force on 1 July 1999.

to 8 years age cannot be employed in the night shifts, do over time or be sent to another location unless they give their permission. Such provisions that also existed in the pre-2000 period are manifestation of the protectionist approach towards women and part of restrictions of men's rights in bringing up their children. They also caused discrimination in admission of women to work. It was thus a violation of the principle of joint parental responsibility in the existing legislation. Such provisions legalized biased approach in considering childcare duties as a prerogative of women only. They also seriously discouraged those men who were interested in contributing to children's upbringing.³⁹

3.10 Discrimination affecting Women's Lives

Participation in paid employment or work is one of the basic ways for an individual to take part in the public sphere and realize themselves as human beings. It is also the main source for earning basic living costs. Therefore, discrimination in employment affects women's lives in many ways. In a survey conducted by the Mongolian Women Lawyers Association (MWLA) in three districts of Ulaanbaatar, 28.5 per cent of participants indicated that direct gender discrimination existed in recruitment practices, 23.5 per cent - age limits, 8.5 per cent - having young children and 13.5 per cent did not determine any special reason for discrimination. It is to be recalled that many women who lost jobs in privatization and structural adjustment had been impoverished and their life conditions significantly deteriorated. Female-headed households belonged to one of the most vulnerable poverty groups of society.⁴⁰ It was revealed that 11,329 female headed households had 6 and over children, 20,825 – 3 to 5 children, 22,376 - up to three children out of a total 54,530 female headed households. In 1999, in the Mongolian capital city of Ulaanbaatar 29,000 households lived under poverty line, of which 11,464 were female headed households. In Orkhon *aimag*, female-headed households constituted 47.8 per cent of all families living under extreme poverty.⁴¹

³⁹United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), op.cit.

⁴⁰ Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, (2000), "Mongolia, Reproductive Health, Gender and Rights", UNO, Ulaanbaatar.

⁴¹National Statistical Office of Mongolia, (2001), Country Paper: Poverty in Mongolia During Transition Period, Manila, Philippines.

Several women were pushed to work as self-employed or in the private sector, which was not considered as financially secured. In addition, thousands of women aged 36-40 who gave birth to four or more children were forced into poverty due to early retirement under the Pension's legislation. All "early retired" persons received a tiny compensation of 6,240 MNT (6.2 USD) per month and the majority of them were women. For example, in the Bayanzurh district of Ulaanbaatar 80 per cent of those who received compensations were women.

Many professional and non-professional women had to change their occupations as well. For example, 38.8 per cent of 300 women respondents in another survey conducted by the National Centre against Violence stated that they stopped work in their professions in order to get a better income. According to the National CEDAW Watch Network Centre which conducted a survey in 1999 on 300 people (men constituted 44.9 per cent and women - 55.09 per cent), 17.6 per cent of male and 30.2 per cent of female respondents were engaged in highly insecure informal employment due to retirement, structural adjustment, manager's attitude and gender bias (being female).⁴² Another example is that 15.6 per cent of female herders (compared to 11.9 per cent of male herders) were forced into this path of employment after loss of their jobs. Many women were engaged in two or three different jobs, combining work in formal and informal sectors and additionally producing food and clothes for immediate needs of their families. As a result, workload of women increased enormously. In rural areas, herder women worked from sunrise to sunset combining animal husbandry, production for sale and for own needs, housekeeping and childcare.

By September 1998 there were 114,012 unemployed women in Mongolia, 34.4 per cent of them were engaged in childcare. During the transition period under study, childcare centers were not filled as families could not afford to pay for services or mothers were not able to find a job for themselves. In some cases parents prefer to bring up children at home. Also, women could not enjoy fully employment rights as they were limited in choice of jobs and were pushed to work in certain occupations or positions,

⁴²National CEDAW Watch Network Centre (NCWNC), (2000), *Implementation of the Mongolian National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Women*, Ulaanbaatar.

which were mainly low-paid.⁴³ Women aged over 35 were perceived too old for a job and promotion. Data obtained by the Women's Information and Research Centre show that 6.8 per cent of all women employees worked at the top managerial level, 43.8 per cent – at the middle level positions and 49.1 per cent – at auxiliary level positions. Such limitations seriously decreased women's economic and social status. Women could not use fully their knowledge, skills and energy for development of society and felt themselves as second class citizens. In general, limited opportunities for women in employment and less possibility to participate in public life significantly affected their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Having fewer opportunities for promotion women were restricted in their opportunities for increasing their incomes which like vicious circle affected their health, education and other opportunities. Women who lost their wages became economically dependent on their husbands. Economic dependence of women on men led to increase in domestic violence. According to a survey conducted in 1998 by the National Centre against Violence among 170 working women in 6 districts of Ulaanbaatar city, 29.1 per cent responded that employment was a source for economic independence, 30.5 per cent - improves their self-confidence and 20.2 per cent - power to spend a portion of income independently.

Lack of jobs also contributed to widespread sexual harassment at workplace. Women resisting assaults from their supervisors or employers had to leave. They did not complain because of their fears to lose a job and get her marriage dissolved.⁴⁴ Loss of work and wages led not only to deterioration of economic status but also to loss of opportunities for self-development. According to data collected by the National CEDAW Watch Network Centre, 25.3 per cent of respondents had been attending retraining courses using their own savings (50.7 per cent of them were men and 49.2 per cent were women). 74.6 per cent of all respondents replied that they had no opportunity to get

⁴³ National Report on the Situation of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) – Mongolia, (2008) at http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/INSTITUTES/UII/confintea/pdf/National_Reports/Asia_per_cent20-per_cent20Pacific/Mongolia.pdf

⁴⁴ Baseline Report to the IWRAW- Asia Pacific, op.cit, p.6.

training (48.3 per cent men and 51.6 per cent women). The reasons for such a situation they described as financial constraints, need to look after children, poor opportunities in the family or temporary hindrances. Lower economic position of women explains that they were limited to possibilities for self-development not only in professional field but also in in the private sphere.

Women constituting a majority in the informal sector were not able to enjoy paid leave and receive social insurance benefits. There was no working mechanism for compensation in the case of injuries or worsened health conditions caused by poor work conditions. All this led to deterioration of women's health. In 1998, maternal mortality rate had increased by 28 per cent while compared to the previous year and reached at 1.73 per 1000 live births.⁴⁵ In addition, lack of day care facilities pushing women into their homes not only limited their opportunities for self-development in terms of their education and professional development but also loss of possible incomes. Unemployed women and those economically dependent on husbands suffered from domestic violence in larger extent than working women.

Lack of jobs and discrimination forced women to accept any jobs, even in unhealthy work environment. In a survey conducted by the National CEDAW Watch Network Centre on informal employment, 67.4 per cent of male respondents and 61.3 per cent of female respondents considered work conditions as being unsatisfactory or bad. 76.1 per cent of men and 61.1 per cent of women replied that their work conditions were both too cold and dusty or too hot, no fresh air, and harmful. Men were mainly engaged in outdoor labour or in the hot conditions, whereas women worked in premises without heating, dirty, dusty, damp or lacking fresh air. Almost all these people built their workplaces themselves, but did not have resources for improvement or did not pay attention to the issue. Gender disaggregated statistical data on occupational diseases is not available, though unofficial data reveals that number of occupational diseases had not been decreased during transition years.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.7.

Huge number of abortions occurred in the period of 1990-1995 demonstrated women's fear to lose their jobs and consequently, the need to contribute financially to the household income. Due to reproductive health education number of contraceptive users steadily increased from 37 per cent in 1994 to 45.7 per cent in 1998. Further, the women engaged in the informal sector lost interest in having children. In a survey conducted by the National CEDAW Watch Network Centre, 56.3 per cent of female respondents had not received any benefits from the Social security funds. Moreover, 66.2 per cent of those women did not enjoy maternity leave (pre-birth) or child care leave, the other 33.7 per cent did not receive benefits for adoption and child rearing of infant or orphan children (Solongo, 2007). Moreover, herder women did not enjoy pre-maternity leave and did not receive maternity and childcare benefits unless they were extremely poor. Women were not able to resume their jobs in the time prescribed by the law, many of them lost their positions because of their pregnancy and giving birth.

Participants of the 1997 survey conducted by the National Centre Against Violence among unemployed women indicated that 33.1 per cent of respondents were not able to find a job, 29.2 per cent said that their husbands did not permit them to work, 16.1 per cent were undertaking child care responsibilities, 10.8 per cent suffered from poor health, 5.4 per cent were not interested in working and 5.4 per cent were retired (UNESCO, 2001). This Economic loss also caused psychological loss for women. Being engaged in undervalued domestic labour, being less visible in the public sphere, having less opportunity for training for professional growth, women lost their interest in more productive work. They felt themselves as second class citizens whose destiny was to spend their lives in a more limited environment. Women who combined work and family and at the same time tried to build up career felt guilty in society and own family. These women could not fully contribute experiences, knowledge and skills they possessed in the development of the society.

In 1998, Liberal Women's Brain Pool conducted the first phase of a survey among the women employees of the Office of Cabinet and 9 Ministries and their offices with the purpose to reveal resources for promotion of women leaders. Only 16 per cent of respondents said that their Ministries, departments and divisions implemented gender

equality policy in promotion, 76.7 per cent said that such policy had not been implemented and 7.1 per cent did not reply. On the question of what causes low promotion of women to higher posts, 34.1 per cent considered the cause as being a woman, 24.3 per cent - women's child-bearing and child-rearing responsibility, 19.7 per cent - absence of management and organizational capability, 19.5 per cent women had less time for self-development because of housekeeping duties and nobody replied that women lack education. 63.7 per cent of all respondents saw that gender awareness of policy makers in the ministries was not satisfactory and only 36.2 per cent said that policy makers were aware of gender issues.⁴⁶

3.11 Measures Taken By the Government

In 1996, the Mongolian government adopted a National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women as a follow-up of the Beijing World Conference on Women. The document identified ten critical areas of concern and defined long-term objectives in achieving genuine gender equality. But implementation of this policy document remained unsatisfactory. Under the CEDAW provisions and the National Plan of Action a little was done by the government in the field of employment. Mongolia also implemented two other major national programmes aimed at improvement in employment: The National Poverty Alleviation Programme and The National Programme on Reduction of Unemployment. For example, the document prepared in 1998 by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare on the implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and future measures noted that almost no measures had been taken by the government with regard to training for women who returned to employment after long leaves of absence for child-rearing, care of parents or spouse, or sickness and for young women in promoting non-traditional and technical skills. However, some key measures were taken by the government, which include the following:

- In 1994-1996, the Mongolian government with the support of UNESCO implemented “Informal education of Gobi herder women.”

⁴⁶ Baseline Report to the IWRAW- Asia Pacific, op.cit.

- Training on women's employment issues and vocational training was organized for the government and NGO participants by International Labour Organization and Social and Economic Commission for Asia Pacific.
- A total of 1482 women from 7 districts of Ulaanbaatar were trained within "Learn and Live" training project. They acquired 14 professions.

Earlier in June 1994, the Mongolian government established a six-year National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP) with objectives to reduce poverty by more than half by the year 2000 through (i) employment creation, (ii) human resource development, and (iii) targeted assistance to those unable to benefit from the new employment opportunities. The NPAP was implemented by involving Women Development Fund, Rural Poverty Alleviation and Microcredit which were promoted with technical assistance of USD 1.7 million from UNDP and USD 5 million from International Agricultural Fund. Income generation in 2464 projects worth USD 1.6 million for vulnerable groups were implemented until 1998. 23,000 poor people had been provided with permanent employment. The Rural development implemented 374 projects that provided 12,100 people with temporary jobs. Disabled women received small-scale low interest loans from the "Income Generation Fund for Vulnerable Groups of Population". In 1992-1995, a total 160.000 MNT loans was given to unemployed from the Fund for Assistance to Employment through Labour Regulation offices. In addition, 2000 new jobs were also created for women.

During the ten years of transition period, public medical services did a little in terms of creation of a system designed for changing attitudes towards health care and medical checks of general population and women in particular. Regular medical check was required only for those engaged in food processing and related services and all other women employees of both formal and informal sectors were omitted from the required attention. But due to government's initiatives in this direction, 90,791 women received maternity benefits worth 1.8 billion MNT and 93,527 women received childcare benefit worth 1.6 billion MNT. In 1997, mothers received 40 million MNT as infant childcare aid and 9175 poor mothers received aid of 40.2 million MNT.

The National Programme for Improvement of Safe and Healthy Conditions of Work was adopted by the government in 1997. Even the national inspection on labour protection situation was taken up by the Labour and Social Protection Control Authority of Mongolia that covered all sectors of economy with the purpose to improve labour safety and work conditions. Under this programme 4952 entities, 191,978 workers, including 49 per cent of women, were inspected and it was found that 30.5 per cent of all injured at workplace were women. Though 30 million MNT was allocated for the implementation of the National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Women, this amount was not spent due to financial constraints in the country.

To conclude, women have traditionally played an active role in the Mongolian economy. This has been reflected in impressive levels of educational attainment and high rates of labour force participation. But the economic transition posed a burden on women. These included lack of childcare facilities and vulnerabilities of older workers as well as additional time spent in unpaid work and family responsibilities. Joblessness and alcoholism resulted in new family problems and high divorce rates. Even the number of women-headed households increased. At the same time, women were found to have less access than men to loans. Many did not hold titles to land and property that had been issued in the transition to private ownership. In addition to a demand to review of loans from non-banking and banking institutions, the focus groups of women working in the informal sector recommended that efforts was to be made through advocacy, laws and regulations to ensure that Mongolia moves toward non-discrimination against women in all workplaces. The need of extending social protection to the informal sector was also identified. Finally, the focus groups pointed to the need for appropriate vocational education tied to labour market demands as many of the women attained high education levels for which there was no effective demand. This adversely affected their self-confidence and living status. Thus, despite several initiatives on the part of the government, economic status of the Mongolian women did not improve much which required concerted efforts by both the government and the NGOs.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

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Since 1991 Mongolian women together with men have been actively involved in the democratic transformation of the whole society. In the process, they also started unifying their efforts in the struggle for their political, civil, economic and social rights which were finally documented in the new Constitution adopted in 1992 (Tsegmed, 2010). The Mongolian Constitution states “Men and women enjoy equal rights in political, economic, social, and cultural fields as well as in marriage”. While legal provisions were made for equal opportunity for both men and women, the decision-making power and visibility of women in public affairs got significantly reduced in the transition period (Sharma, 1992).

4.1 Democracy and Women’s Participation in Political Process

Despite economic shocks, there had been impressive democratic developments in Mongolia especially in comparison with other Central Asian republics during transition period. What was significant while compared with pre- transition period was that multiple political parties had emerged, and several elections had taken place changing governments without disruption. However, there was one facet of democracy that had been less successful and which was not so frequently acknowledged: the limited access for women to political and other decision- making positions.

In that traditional Mongolian nomadic society, women were excluded from the formal political system and their sphere of influence in decision-making was circumscribed within the household. The contemporary perception of the position of women in decision-making in traditional Mongolian society is very much influenced by popular narratives of the lives of queens as influential consorts of important rulers (UNIFEM, 2001: 53). But during the transition period women’s participation in economic and political spheres increased, however their proportion in the decision making and

managerial level had not dramatically increased. This was also associated with the fact that leading political parties nominated less women candidates than before (UN, 2007: 33). The representation of women in the national parliament was well below the international 30 per cent target set at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Women were 23 per cent of the total in 1990, 3 per cent in 1992, and about 11 per cent following the 1996 and 2000 elections.¹

While considering Mongolian women's political participation, three arenas of access to politics have been observed: The first arena is for women Parliament members, the second is for women members of political parties, and the third belongs to the women at the grassroots level. Each arena has its own specifics and differs from each other by the numbers of participating women, their role and responsibilities in society, educational level, awareness of politics, and the ways of participation in politics. (Severinghaus,1995). Women were found to have less influence in policy-making bodies and forums (Benwell, 2006). Even their representation in parliament is getting reduced as evident by the fact that only 9.2 per cent of MPs are women, which shows a threefold reduction compared to the previous parliament. No woman held a ministerial portfolio and there were no women State secretaries, ambassadors or provincial governors.

During 1991-2000 period of transition in Mongolia, women's representation in the Boards of Political Parties had been one of the important indicators of their political participation. Initially, women seemed to be fairly represented in the three largest and most influential parties, i.e., Mongolian National Democratic Party (MNDP), Mongolian Social Democratic Party (MSDP) and Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP). But later the MPRP, an oldest party with 70 years history of ruling the country, significantly lost women membership.² However, there had been a wide gap between women's entry into a political party and their inclusion in its leadership. There were no women at the top leadership positions in political parties such as party chair, deputy chair

¹ Presentation by Ms. Ichinnorov at the Conference on Participation of Women in politics: Challenges and Tendency, Ulaanbaatar, 21 Oct. 2004; cited in Combined fifth, sixth and seventh periodic reports of States parties: Mongolia, p.34.

² Women in Decision Making and Management at <http://www3.uakron.edu/worldciv/worldciv/images/Asia/Mongol/page14.htm>

or general secretary except one woman who was given the charge to perform as acting general secretary of MNDP. Very few women had been elected in the national executive councils of the political parties: MPRP - 10 per cent, i.e., 1 woman out of 10 members; MNDP – 9.5 per cent, i.e., 2 women out of 21 members; MSDP - 10 per cent, i.e., 3 women out of 30 members (CAPWIP, 2000).

The gender inequality in political participation can be attributed to the opinion of a small segment of society dominated by men which indicated that “women members of the Parliament cannot work on making gender sensible all newly approving laws, regulations, and overcome influences and restrictions of political parties which they belong to” (Tumursukh, 2001). These people supported by existing women parliamentarians did not join the women’s efforts for allocation of financial means in the state budget to implement the National Program on Women’s Advancement. But there were not a few people of another view point who thought that it was not right to blame the women parliamentarians in the relative failure of the National Program implementation as there were other causes also including the existing wrong mechanisms or political and economical structure in the country (Fish, 1998). As regards grassroots’ women education and level of understanding politics among them was very low which had added to strong backwardness in public mentality on women’s leadership capacity as well. In short, it can be said that women citizens even after the first decade of transition lack their own belief and opinion on politics and were not aware of how to participate in politics, and what benefits could be achieved from the political participation (Fritz, 2002).

Despite the proclamation of non-discrimination and equality between men and women in the 1992 constitution, ratification of the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and adoption of the MDG goal of ensuring 30% representation of women in parliament by 2015, the political leadership had not made any efforts to support advancement of women, especially in the political arena. In fact, as the political competition had intensified and progressively gained a zero sum quality due to persistent corruption and large profits to make from the mining sector, the two main parties – the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (MPRP) and the Mongolian

Democratic Party (MDP) – made explicit steps to exclude women from the political competition. This was clearly demonstrated by the sudden repeal of the 30% quota for women in the list of political party candidates. Parliamentarians repeatedly violated basic norms and principles of democratic governance to ensure the revocation of the quota despite active protests by women’s NGOs and Presidential veto. Furthermore, when justifying their actions, many of the parliamentarians used openly discriminatory language against women and portrayed the political domain as being too rough and dirty for women. In addition, intensive media campaign was launched through TV and newspapers to discredit women’s political participation, heavily using discriminatory traditionalist language.³

4.2 Impact of Democratization on Women

Political participation is remarkably high in Mongolia, where levels of voter turnout across all the elections since transition are well above 80%. Such turnout rates have not been seen in developed Western democracies for years and they are healthy indication of the commitment of Mongolians to democracy. In addition, the participation of women in politics has grown since the transition, but is still far from parity in representation.

When the democratic reform process started in 1990, Mongolian women were a highly educated mass, but burdened with double or triple duties and were unassertive "passive" subjects with regard to state policy-making. The democratization process and the 1992 Constitution reaffirmed the equal rights of male and female citizens to civil and political activities. This process took place in the context of economic collapse and weakening of the political and administrative links with the dissolved former Soviet Union. However, the bureaucracy, the rules, mechanisms and structures remain an important force as far as decision-making and policy implementation is concerned. The party had undergone a process of internal reform and the institutions of both state and party had been particularly involved in shaping the transition. The nature of the

³ Mongolian women’s fund (MONES) at <http://www.inwf.org/our-members/asia/mongolian-womens-fund-mones/>

involvement of party women in the shift from a one state party to a multiparty democracy is not, however, well documented. Nor is women's influence over the process of transition, especially in relation to how and what political structures and organs were created and negotiated among the established centers of political and administrative power (UNIFEM, 2001: 54).

Women had played an active role in the democratization process and had been particularly dynamic in the growth of civil society and the voluntary sector as well as in the media. Women's NGOs remained active in framing and scrutinizing the laws guaranteeing civil, political rights and prohibiting discrimination against women, using CEDAW widely as the framework in drafting new laws and amending existing ones (UNIFEM: 2001: 54).

In the course of these changes, the quota system for women's representation was abandoned. The emphasis was put on enacting laws that specified the institutional framework and governed the functions of parliament. A constitutional court had been established to safeguard the constitution, which enshrined the principle of separation of powers of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. The Great Hural became to the highest organ of the state and the supreme legislative power. Parliament was given the power to approve the state budget and determines the legal basis for local self-governing authorities.⁴

4.3 National Representation and Participation in Decision Making

Promoting women's participation at decision-making levels was one of the most challenging areas for Mongolia, amid a complex set of structural, institutional, political and socio-cultural factors. The Constitution explicitly stated that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of sex, among other categories, and those men and women shall enjoy equal rights in political, economic, social and cultural fields. It guaranteed the rights of citizens to elect and to be elected to State bodies. These same principles were also reflected in the laws on State Great Khural (National Parliament) and

⁴ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition: A Report*, Prepared by Nalini Burn and Oyuntsetseg Oidov.

citizens' representatives' Khurals (local legislatures), the Law on Civil Service and other laws and regulations, providing for the formal equality of men and women in exercising their right to participation at decision-making levels. Thus, eligible voters of 25 years of age, regardless of gender, had the right to be elected to the State Great Khural either through nomination by parties or coalitions or independently upon collection of no less than 801 voter signatures in support of the candidates.⁵ Furthermore, citizens are free to establish a political party, join a party, leave a party, and participate in political activities in accordance with the law, party charter and the election platform of the respective party. Women actively used this political space to work through political parties and/or non-governmental organizations to exercise their political rights, obtain party nomination or promote nomination of female candidates for national and local elections and appointment of women to high-level government posts. Women's non-governmental organizations affiliated with political parties remained particularly active in this respect and contributed significantly to raising public awareness of the importance of women's political participation and representation.

The number of women running for office had consistently grown at both local and national levels, signifying growing interest in political office and increasing self-confidence among women. Despite this positive trend, women's representation in the unicameral National Parliament had declined during the transition period (1991- 2000).⁶

⁵ “Implementation of women’s political rights: participation of women at decision making, Mongolia”, 2010 at <http://webapps01.un.org/nvp/indpolicy.action?id=2603>

⁶ Ibid.

Table 11: Share of Female Members in National Parliament (1990-2000)

Year	Male	Female	Total
1990	421	9	430
1992	73	3	76
1996	70	6	76
2000	68	8	76

Source: The data is compiled by this researcher (Jyoti Pandey), taken from Inter- Parliamentary Union (IPU) PARLINE database (various years).

The representation of women in the national parliament had declined sharply and was well below the international 30 per cent target set at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Women were 23 per cent of the total in 1990, 3 per cent in 1992, and around 11 per cent following the 1996 and 2000 elections. Table shows that these low rates extended to all levels of political decision making. This was surprising considering the high participation rate of women in the workforce, but it mirrors the fact that women rarely held senior positions in either the public or private sectors.⁷

⁷ Asian Development Bank and World Bank, (2005), Country Gender Assessment; cited in Combined fifth, sixth and seventh periodic reports of States parties: Mongolia, 2007, p.34.

Table 12: Proportion of Women in Political Decision Making

Positions	1997		2001	
	Total	Women	Total	Woman
President	1	0	1	1
Speaker of Parliament	1	0	1	1
Deputy Speaker	1	0	1	1
Prime Minister	1	0	1	1
Members of Parliament	76	8	76	76
Cabinet members	9	1	11	n/a
All level Governors (aimag, soum, city, district)	373	9	338	n/a
Ambassadors	28	0	30	n/a
Chairpersons of local Hurals	22	0	22	n/a

Sources: 1997 data Women’s Information Referral Centre from UNIFEM 2001; and 2001 data from Survey. “Political Participation of Women,” Gender Centre for Sustainable Development, 2002; cited in Country Gender Assessment—Mongolia, 2005.

Female politicians identified several factors that increasingly limited their participation in elections. The financial resources required to run a campaign had increased sharply at each election, and women found it harder than their male counterparts to raise the funds required. Nominating candidates within parties was also complex and favoured males with existing networks. Senior party members also ran female candidates against each other which were arguably the main factor in reducing the number of women elected⁸

Political and economic participation means having an effective role in making decisions that influence an individual’s life. The gender empowerment measure (GEM)

⁸ Asian Development Bank and World Bank, (2005), Country Gender Assessment: Mongolia.

uses variables explicitly constructed to measure the relative empowerment of women and men in politics and economics. This gender gap means that decisions are made without the direct influence of half of the population which restricts democracy and infringes the rights of women guaranteed in the constitution. As noted by one female Mongolian parliamentarian, gender issues are not considered to be important in political affairs, and even she herself rarely recollects considering a gender perspective.⁹ Political parties relegate women's issues to the social sphere, and it might be argued that the government's tendency to place gender equality in the context of the family only reinforces this.

4.4 Women Participation in Local Politics

Different international conferences put an emphasis on the fact that women have the right to participate in political decision making, for reasons of equality, democracy and legitimacy. 'The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration, and sustainable development in all areas of life' (UN Women's Conference Beijing, 1995).

Participation of women in local governance is often easier for women to participate in local than at the national level, because eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent. Besides, local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life and easier to combine with rearing children.¹⁰ It can be the first level that women can break into and as such it may serve as a springboard to national politics by developing capacities and gaining experiences.

Likewise local politics can also be more interesting for women as they are the persons who know their community well, being the major users of space and services in the local community, such as water, electricity, waste disposal, health clinics, and other social services. They also participate actively in organizations in their neighborhood, and

⁹ Interview during January 2004; cited in Country Gender Assessment: Mongolia, Asian Development Bank and World Bank, 2005.

¹⁰ Hui-ping Chou, (2006), "Introduction to Mongolia's Local Government System", *Bimonthly Journal on Mongolian and Tibetan Current Situation*, Vol.16, No.6.

it is easier to involve these organizations in formal political decision making at the local level.

As many Mongolian women participated in organizations at the local level it was often thought that decentralization was in women's interest. Decentralization thus made the local level more important, and as this importance grew, so did male interest in it. But the fact remains that women still suffer by many barriers; individual as well as institutional factors related to the organization of society and the political system, with the risk that they will not reap equal benefits.

However, significant progress was made at local levels. As of 2000, women held 11.8 percent of the seats in Parliament, 4.5 percent of the speakers of Aimag and Capitals Citizen's Khurals, 12.9 percent of their members, 13 percent of the speakers of sum and district Khurals, and 25 percent of their members were represented by women. Except one vice cabinet secretary, there were no women ministers, vice ministers or even state secretaries and no women aimag governors. Sixteen percent of the heads of departments within line ministries were women and only 3.3 percent of *soum* and district governors were female.¹¹ This was the situation of Mongolian women at the local level politics.

4.5 Barriers to Participation in Governance

Although women in Mongolia enjoyed the right of equality in certain sectors of civil and political life, it remains evident that women were absent from the highest levels of political decision-making at both the national and local levels. Women possess equal voting rights to men, and it is generally accepted that women cast vote freely without pressure from males, although. One in four Mongolians assert that women should not be making their own choice at the ballot box without the advice of men (The Asia Foundation: 2001). Although, women's groups made important strides in empowering Mongolian women and raising awareness about their rights, women and their concerns remained marginalized in society. In addition, women's participation in politics faced many obstacles. These obstacles limited women participation in active politics during the

¹¹ The Government of Mongolia, (2002), National Committee on Gender Equality, Government Resolution, number 274.

transition period. Following obstacles have been noticed in the course of this research, so far as Mongolian women's participation in politics is concerned:

4.5.1 Fundamental Inequality

Despite this fact that women have constitutional rights, they are not seen as equal. Their roles are closely tied to their reproductive and household activities, and politics and community affairs are seen as unsuitable for them. Women are constrained by obstacles such as culture and tradition (the view that men are superior to women), religion, political turmoil, violence, money, workloads and lack of opportunities.¹² Cultural beliefs subordinate women to men and define women's place in the home and the public sphere as man's world does not encourage women to run for political office. These beliefs undermine women's self-confidence to run for office.

4.5.2 Political and Economic Instability

Political and economic instability affects the development of a political culture with democratic norms. Socio-economic norms and religious interpretations are frequently used for challenging and reinterpreting women's rights and creating insecurity for women. And while women have equal political rights to participate, in reality they can be actively discouraged to do so. Highly patriarchal societies enforce rules, responsibilities and behaviour for women, enforcing these norms in ways that affect their self-confidence, limiting their access to information and skills and reinforcing their lower status.

4.5.3 Discrimination

Women face discrimination when standing for office and when elected or appointed to government positions. Attitudes that put politics and decision-making into the male preserve find women as incapable of management and governance roles.¹³

¹² "Women in Local Government in Asia and the Pacific: A comparative analysis of thirteen countries", p. 4, at http://www.unescap.org/huset/women/reports/comparative_report.pdf

¹³ Ibid. p. 5.

4.5.4 Male Domination in Political Institutions

Political parties are dominated by men who tend to resist greater participation by women. Correspondingly, political parties are not pro-active in changing their own nature and supporting more women to engage in local politics. While there are few women on decision-making bodies, the styles and modes of working are such that are acceptable to men. This can limit the extent to which women can raise their issues of social justice. Some quarters also find that they are judged harshly by society and by their colleagues.

4.5.5 Campaign Expenses

Campaign expenses are prohibitive for women, particularly while they continue to earn less than men in the labour market. Once elected, the rate of remuneration can be insufficient for almost a full time job. The lack of childcare and the timing of meetings can also be a barrier.

4.5.6 Fraught Electoral Process

The electoral process is fraught with corruption, violence, bribery and attacks on the dignity of individual candidates. This is a major deterrent to women's involvement in politics.

4.5.7 Numerous Responsibilities

There is little recognition of the unequal division of labour between women and men within households. Women have numerous responsibilities in the family and these consume a lot of their time, energy and resources. Political parties and local governments do not take account of the reality of women's role in social reproduction when organizing meetings and political events, or developing election campaigns.¹⁴

4.6 NGOs Initiatives and Role of Media

As already mentioned, after the fall of communism in Mongolia, the country adopted in 1992 a new democratic constitution, which guaranteed equal rights for men

¹⁴ Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP), Issues in Women's Political Empowerment in Asia-Pacific Region at <http://www.capwip.org/resources/issuesin/issues.pdf>

and women. That year also marked the emergence of citizen-initiated NGOs (non-governmental organizations)¹⁵, which were coexisting with the “mass” organizations that were beginning to reformulate themselves in the new political environment.

NGOs for women were among the first public support organizations that were established, and women’s NGOs stood at the frontline of most democratic developments in Mongolia. In 1992, it were the women who first began forming NGOs, initially to address the drastic reduction of social protection provided under the new market-led economy. Throughout the country’s transition, the activities of women’s NGOs evolved and women leaders continued to develop new strategies for achieving organizational goals.

Women’s NGOs’ focus ranged from the delivery of services to public affairs, with several of the more prominent women’s organizations concerned with public affairs and women’s participation in the political process. The Women for Social Progress Movement (WSPM) founded in 1992, strived to educate people on democratic governance and provided support to help improvements in the economic situation of women. In 1997, the WSPM established the Voter Education Centre. Its activities included radio and television programs to educate people on democratic governance and the training of rural activists. The centre published newsletters that compared the voting records of members of parliament with their campaign platforms and a Citizen’s Guide on the Government, which included the information of members on parliament.¹⁶

There was little or no gender analysis in the design, collection and analysis stage of most policy-based research in Mongolia. As a result gender-sensitive research, by both government and NGOs, suffered from incomplete disaggregation by sex and other pertinent variables, such as age, residence and income. Therefore, Women’s Information and Research Centre (WIRC) was established in 1995 to address the

¹⁵ The majority of NGOs were founded after 1997 when the NGO Law was passed.

¹⁶ Tsetsegjargal Tsenden , “Women’s NGOs in Mongolia and Their Role in Democratization”, p.2, at <http://www.apisa5.org/documents/Tsenden.pdf>

topic and make sure the proper information is collected. The Centre started to promote the process of mainstreaming gender issues into government policy, planning and programming services in Mongolia and also collaborated with other Women's NGOs and advocacy groups towards achieving women's political and economic empowerment.

Since 1996, a new consciousness started taking hold among women, stimulated by their participation in and the influence of the Women's Conference in Beijing. This Conference exposed Mongolians to many new ideas and linked women to their colleagues around the globe. New Initiatives for Citizen Participation provided the needed attention to the broader processes of citizen participation, like using new approaches to influence decision making and to promote positive changes outside the election process. These new initiatives fell into two broad categories. The first was the expansion of advocacy efforts, growing from influencing decisions on certain issues to include monitoring or watchdog activities. The second was an expanded role in the legislative drafting process.¹⁷ Women's NGOs had undertaken several important initiatives in these two areas and began to engage in advocacy.

By mid 1990's, the Women's NGOs had expanded their focus to include watchdog groups whose main role was to promote government accountability. The CEDAW Watch Network Center was established in 1996 as the CEDAW Watch club under the Liberal Women's Brain Pool. In 1997, a seven-member Coalition of Women's Organizations was formed to monitor government implementation of the United Nations Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Mongolia signed the convention in 1981.¹⁸

Since 1990, the national mechanism for women's issues and policy on women has undergone major changes. Women's NGOs and women activists had made considerable progress in getting the government to adopt the National Program for the Advancement of Women and establishing National mechanism for women's issues.

¹⁷ Ibid, p.3.

¹⁸ Ibid, p.3.

The decade of the transition was coincided with the UN Conferences of the 1990s, and had witnessed the engagement of both the women's NGOs as well as the government, with the support of UN agencies and other organizations presented in Mongolia. As a result of their concerted efforts, the Government of Mongolia formally adopted the National Program for the Advancement of Women (NPAW) in March 1996 by the Government Resolution No.145 (UNIFEM 2001: 66).

Political empowerment had many evolutions during the transition period. Mongolian women's share of parliamentary seats fell sharply after the beginning of transition, from 23 per cent to 3.9 per cent in the 1992 election due to cancellation of the quota system for women's representation (Tseden, 2009: 83). The small share of women candidates and women elected in 1992 had focused Women's NGOs' attention on the reasons for this phenomenon as well as what to do to change it. Strategies centered on assessing the role of the multi-party system and introducing quotas for parliamentary representation. Notable and successful examples include Women's NGOs joining efforts to increase the number of women in the 1996 parliamentary elections and the collective request made by 23 organizations at the first Women's NGO conference for the government to form a National Women's Council. Earlier, a round table meeting of Women's NGOs titled "The Election System and Women's Participation" was held in November 1995, at which it was suggested that election social psychology was driven primarily by economic and political elites rather than by the general public or ordinary electors (Katherine S.Hunter 1999: 9).

With regard to the quota, the first coalition of Women's NGOs before the 1996 election proposed reintroducing the quota as the best way to increase women's representation in political decision-making. The second Mongolian Women's NGO Coalition was formed on December 10, 1999. The 27-member Women's NGO Coalition mobilized to increase the number of women in decision making positions for the 2000 national and local government elections. As the result of coalition of Women's NGOs, women's share of parliamentary seats rose from six in the election of 1996 to eight in the 2000 elections. (Tseden, 2009: 115-116).

Simultaneously, proportion of women candidates at all elections including the local ones had increased. The Law on the Election of the Parliament which stated that a “minimum 30 percent of candidates for parliamentary elections from each political party should be women” was passed by the Parliament of Mongolia. The women’s quota in elections was one of the significant ways to guarantee women’s participation in state policy formulation and decision making process at all levels and to promote and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of vulnerable groups such as women and children. Women’s NGOs still supporting women’s leadership both in the government and non-government positions and want to get more women elected at all levels.

On the whole, It can be said that Women’s NGOs played a major role in motivating the government to address gender inequities in many aspects of Mongolian social, economic, and political life during democratization period. Attention in the following areas were focused to ensure that women benefit equitably from development:

4.6.1 Transformation of Public Discourse and Public Awareness:

The main achievement of Women’s NGOs was that the basic ideas and notions of feminist and gender theories have become a part and parcel of the life of modern Mongolian society. And, many Mongolians and decision makers started to understand that these were not personal problems of separate women but were social and political problems of the society as a whole.

4.6.2 Focus on Women Empowerment:

Women’s NGOs continued to pressure government to take its commitment for protecting women’s rights. They had long experience in using international treaties and agreements (e.g. CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action) and the constitution in a wide range of development issues.

4.6.3 Political Participation of Women:

As a result of several coalitions of Women’s NGOs, proportion of women candidates at all elections increased.. Women’s NGOs also helped in educating

women voters to claim their constitutional rights of political participation and lobby for issues of specific concern.

4.6.4 Internationalized Activity

Mongolian Women's NGOs became very well known in its broad activities at the international level and contributed to improve women's status in the world. They made the women issues the international concern.

The developments discussed above provided a room for optimism concerning the prospects for Women's NGOs as an element of a democracy-promoting civil society. However, a number of characteristics of the Women's NGOs in Mongolia impede its ability to influence society and in some cases even work against its potential role in democratisation. Chief among these weaknesses were a lack of connections with its grassroots citizens, so called negative public opinion of the Women's NGOs and women activists, poor links among competing NGOs, and extreme political weaknesses.(Tseden, 2009:10)

4.7 National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

Prior to 1990, the Mongolian Women's Federation was executing both a government and non-governmental function in its capacity as the national machinery for women's concerns. The current national machinery for the advancement of women in Mongolia is located in the Population and Social Protection Department of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. It was established in 1992 and has direct responsibility for the coordination, and monitoring of women's affairs it serves as the secretariat of the National Council for Women. The Cabinet Member in charge of Health and Social Welfare is responsible for overseeing the national machinery's programmes. In addition, a "Youth, Family and Women's agency" which is an implementing organization had been established under the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

By a government resolution in 1996, "The National Council for Women" chaired by the Minister of Health and Social Welfare was established. It is responsible for coordination of inter-sectoral policy development and implementation of the National

Programme of Action. The Council consists of 39 members such as Members of Parliament, Department Directors of Ministries, representatives of academic institutions, NGOs and community organizations.

In the State Great Khural, the areas of women's concerns came under the jurisdiction of the Standing Committee for Social Policy. The chairperson of the Standing Committee paid specific attention on women's issues and organized a review group. In addition, women Members of Parliament had also established a Parliament Group. At the local administrative levels, the areas of concern included direct responsibility of the Social Policy Department of the aimag and the city Governor's Office and its staff in charge of population related issues. Non-governmental organizations played an important role in the advancement of women issues. Under the process of democratization, many new organizations had come into existence and they were performing crucial role.

The gender information network was being coordinated through the central and local statistical offices. Nearly 40 statistical indicators were collected and analyzed on the basis of gender and a special booklet on gender-disaggregated information has been produced. In addition, the "Women's Information and Research Centre", an NGO, played an important role in the development of gender analysis.

The national machinery for the advancement of women was under-staffed and under-equipped and its international cooperation was limited. Due to inadequate resources governmental and non-governmental women's organizations were unable to carry out sufficient activities among women particularly vulnerable groups. Following priorities were taken into consideration to further develop the national machinery for the advancement of women and their concerns:

- a) Strengthening inter-sectoral approach through strengthening the National Council of Women and its Secretariat;
- b) Developing the programme management and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the National Programme for the Advancement of Women;

- c) Increasing the resource mobilization for national and community based programmes and projects;
- d) Improving international cooperation in areas of women's concerns at the sub regional and regional levels; and
- e) Strengthening the capacity of the Women's Information and Research Center for the development of gender-analysis.

4.7.1 The National Programme for the Advancement of Women (NPAW)

Although the endorsement of global agendas and commitments, as a top-down process, was characteristic of the socialist era, the process had been different since the transition in Mongolia. The decade of transition coincided with the UN Conferences of the 1990s, which also saw the synchronization of opinion of both the women's NGOs and advocates within the government to make concerted efforts towards the welfare of women. This gave way to the Government of Mongolia formally adopting the National Programme for the Advancement of Women (NPAW) in March 1996 through a resolution tabled in the parliament.

This resolution states that it is imperative to assess the status of women in the juncture of the transition process, define its policy and guidelines for action on the basis of national consensus and ensure the full implementation of the programme in line with the commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Further in 1999, UNIFEM signed a memorandum of understanding with the Mongolian government to provide assistance to implement NPAW.

The National Programme for the Advancement of Women identified eleven critical areas of concern and provided strategic objectives and actions for the period 1996-2020 that include the following:

- a) Women and Economic Development
- b) Women and Poverty

- c) The Status of Rural Women
- d) Women and Education
- e) Women and Reproductive Health
- f) Women and the Family
- g) Women in Power and Decision-Making
- h) Violence Against Women and Human Rights
- i) National Machinery for Advancement of Women
- j) Women and the Mass Media
- k) Women and Environment

The objectives and benchmarks laid out in the National Programme covered the following periods corresponding to the stages of Mongolia's National Development Plan.¹⁹

- 1996-2000: During this period, national surveys and analysis of the status of women and gender equality was decided to be undertaken. The information collected would provide the basis for developing a systematic policy to ensure equal rights of women and men and to improve the status of women within the context of democracy and market economy. Policy was decided to focus on reducing unemployment and relative poverty, eliminating extreme poverty, restoring levels of education and health achieved prior to transition and laying the foundations for further development.
- 2001-2010: During this period, it was decided that the objectives during this period would be to ensure sustainable economic development to create a favorable environment for ensuring women's access to lifelong education, their full participation in political and

¹⁹ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), (2001), op.cit, p. 59-60.

economic life, including decision-making, the reduction of the burden of domestic work, recognition of the value of unremunerated labor, and the provision of social security.

- 2010-2020: During this period, conditions for economic self-reliance, sustainable growth and human development would be established, and the equal participation of women and men in political, economic, social and family shares will be achieved with women enabled to play a full and active role in the development process.

The Programme also stated that resources must be mobilized at national and local levels of government through expansion of international cooperation, both multilateral and bilateral, and with the participation of the private sector.

In 1996, the National Council on Women's Issues was established as the agency responsible for monitoring the implementation of the NPAW. Five years after the Program was created, the government came under criticism for a lack of commitment to implementation. The National Symposium on the Implementation of the NPAW, held in June 1999, pointed out that due to the unworkable national machinery and financial constraints the objectives of the first phase of the National Program could not be completely materialized. Consequently, in order to empower the national machinery, the government decided to change the National Council on Women's Issues to the National Council on Gender Equality (NCGE) in January 2001 and the responsibility shifted to the Vice- Chief of Government Cabinet Secretariat.²⁰

Among the executives, the lack of progress in raising the profile of the NPAW and in institutionalizing its implementation remained a critical issue to address. The structure, function, location and composition of the NPAW continued to be pertinent to the need to make government accountable for commitments to women's economic, social and political rights. One of the major difficulties in institutionalizing the NPAW was the practice of making large-scale changes in the government machinery each time a different party came to power in elections. This tends to make structures and mechanisms

²⁰ Japan International Cooperation Agency Planning and Evaluation Department, (2002), Country WID profile: Mongolia, , Women in Development (WID) Profile-Mongolia.

rather short-lived and precarious, as was the case with the women's machinery (UNIFEM: 2001: 60).

The question of political will was also crucial. However, the same was directly related to the failure in institutionalizing the implementation of NPAW. If there was cross-party consensus in promoting the agenda of gender equality and women's advancement, particularly under a rights-based approach, institutionalizing it within the decision-making and administrative machinery would have survived successive governments. This then raised the question of how parties assess the importance of the NPAW and of mainstreaming it in the legislative agenda, which had already been outlined. The analysis of the situation as regards governance issues in the legislature reveals that competing parties had not developed leadership over a legislative agenda even over mainstream issues. The difficulty of mobilizing support over the passage of draft bills such as the one on domestic violence was one such example. In addition, Parliament's oversight function over the conduct of government, its accountability and ability to implement the laws it passes was limited and not clearly articulated either in principle or in practice (UNDP, 2000b).

Another question was the composition of the national women's machinery, particularly with regard to the participation of NGOs. That issue always had to be settled by an incumbent government. Where NGOs are identified with political parties or factions, then the debate the issues and the policy options tend to become polarized along party lines and can become enmeshed with the confrontational or adversarial politics of a multiparty system. On the other hand, NGO wide caucuses and women's caucuses could cut across party lines to set a common agenda and develop consensus on strategies and implement a common plan of action. The pitfall here was that women's caucuses was seen as threatening by an overwhelmingly male political establishment on the one hand and that women's issues continued to be set apart from the mainstream of the political agenda on the other (UNIFEM, 2001: 61).

Focusing on the target of getting women into Parliament had also to take into account the fact that the centers of power, agenda-setting and decision making were not

really located in the legislature but more in the executive. And this only up to the extent to which under globalization and an increasingly market driven economy, real power continues to reside in the state political organs. This means that closer attention needed to be paid on how to combine state leverage in raising corporate responsibility towards gender equality with more direct focus on the corporations and private- sector institutions.

The weakness of the legislature as a power and decision-making point was compounded by another area of concern, namely, the weak link between the electorate and Parliament, at both central and local levels of decision-making. This weakness was manifested in the absence of effective representation and articulation of the interests of grass-roots voters and accountability towards the electorate. This situation rendered the strategy of focusing on women's representation in Parliament to widen their access to a political life.

Linked to the issue of representation of women in Parliament was the issue of how the agenda for gender equality was represented in the political arena and institutionalized in formal decision- making instances. What women could do once they are in Parliament will depend on the transformation of other decision-making structures and instances. Getting more women selected as candidates has to be accompanied by a redefinition of how women's issues are presented in party programmes and manifestos and carried over into legislative mandates. It in turn means empowering women in the political arena to make governments accountable for this agenda, by putting in place the mechanisms and procedures to mainstream a gender approach on the basis of the National Programme for the Advancement of Women.

To conclude, the declining role of women at the higher echelons of political and economic leadership implies that the objectives formulated in the Nairobi Declaration on improving the status of women worldwide were not properly achieved in Mongolia during transition period. It was especially unfair, given the education level of the Mongolian women, and it might be regarded as an underestimation of their potential contribution to the country's progress and development. On the other hand, it should also

be admitted that women themselves lacked initiatives in this phase. In light of this, increasing women's participation in decision-making was perceived as one of the key objectives in the advancement of women nationwide.

Mongolia hoped to increase the percentage of women in parliament and government in coming years by 10 per cent and later by 20 per cent. To this end, the Government endeavoured ,in all possible ways to encourage the parties to take concrete steps to promote and support women in acquiring management knowledge and skills through various forms of training and the mobilization of women's non-governmental organizations, so that their concrete participation at all levels of decision making can be ensured..

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

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The women subject is an important area of study in many disciplines, such as literary theory, drama studies, film theory, performance theory, contemporary art history, anthropology, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis. These disciplines sometimes differ in their approaches to how and why they study about women. For instance in anthropology, sociology and psychology, women is often studied as a practice, whereas in cultural studies representation of women is more often examined. Women's studies also constitute a discipline in itself: an interdisciplinary area of study that incorporates methods and approaches from a wide range of disciplines. It makes sense to go for women's studies, as without it there cannot be any development studies. The findings of this research work helped examine historical and contemporary representations of women in social, economic and political arenas in the Mongolian context.

Since the central objective of this dissertation was to examine the overall status of women in Mongolia's transitional society during the period from 1991 to 2000, the preceding chapters tried to highlight the post-Soviet changes occurred in gender relations and women's participation in the economic, social and political structure of the country. The findings of this research work indicate that Mongolia's transition to democracy and market economy has had both the positive as well as negative impact on the economic, social and political status of women. As all these have been discussed and analysed in different chapters in order to understand the real situation of Mongolian women who had comparatively better situation in the pre-1991 era, concluding observations can be made as highlighted in the following paragraphs.

The status of women is an important factor influencing the overall development of a country. In any civilization it shows the stage of its evolution at which the civilization arrived. The term 'status' includes not only personal and proprietary rights but also duties, liabilities and disabilities. In the case of Mongolian women, it means her personal and proprietary rights as well as her duties, liabilities and disabilities vis-à-vis the society and her family members. Over the ages, the status of women in the society has always

been secondary to that of men. This is actually surprising as historical evidence shows that during the prehistoric times, it was the woman who was the leader in the house. However, the situation changed once the concept of settled living, i.e. civilization came into existence. Settled living called for performing a number of tasks that required strength, which the men had more than the women. Physical labour was the requirement and the men were more proficient to it than the women. The women began to look after the home and the pattern was set. As men performed more tasks and moved ahead more than the women, the shift in status gradually happened and over a period of time men became the dominant force in the society. This is the rule of thumb in quite a few parts of the world. Though women nowadays are fighting for their rights and for equal treatment with men, it is still not seen in many parts of the world, especially in the Asian and African countries. Nevertheless, there have been huge strides made in this direction ever since women began to demand their equality.

While analyzing the issues concerning the status of women in Mongolia it has been revealed that although the women in this tiny populated country enjoy equal freedom and political, economic and social rights with men, their situation has deteriorated during the 21 years of country's transition to democracy and market economy. The low level of employment, violence against women, lack of political representation, and poverty are the most worrisome issues confronting the Mongolian women. In fact, the Mongolian Constitution of 1992 prohibits all forms of discrimination, stating that "no person may be discriminated against on the basis of ethnic origin, language, race, age, sex, social origin or status, property or post, religion, opinion, or education." Even in 1981, Mongolia was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. But reports show that the country has yet to address several important articles. For example, no information has been provided on sex roles and stereotyping, equality before the law and in civil matters, and equality in marriage and family law. As a result, official information on these issues is scarce.

At a superficial glance women in Mongolia are not under a serious problem of discrimination. They have same or even better status than men in some human

development indicators such as education. Prior to 1991, the socialist Mongolian state paid attention to strengthening the position of women by taking the responsibilities of addressing some of the traditional role and duties of women and availed their services to kindergartens and nursery schools, thus enabling the women to be employed and educated. As a result, achievements were made in gender equality in the field of education. More or less the same remains visible even in the post-1991 period. But it has been the health status of the Mongolian women that required attention during the transition period. The low level of public health education was a contributing factor: according to the national survey on reproductive health, 65 per cent of women did not know much or had never heard of cervical cancer and 41 per cent of women were unaware of self-checks for the prevention of breast cancer. The incidence of breast cancer increased two-fold between 1995 and 2000, reaching 5.6 incidences per 100,000 persons; and over 80 per cent of breast cancer cases were detected at late stages. Despite the high level of awareness of family planning, the abortion rate remained high. Evidently, 13 per cent of maternal deaths were caused by unsafe abortions, while 39 per cent of all abortions were repeat abortions. Teen pregnancy and abortion rates went up, particularly in rural areas.

During the years of transition in Mongolia some worrying signs emerged as shown by the existing documents on gender issues. Some unequal conditions affected the Mongolian women adversely, especially with regard to their economic status. While the employment rate figures were improving relatively, there was little qualitative change with most jobs still being informal. The rate of female labour force participation was lower than that of men. Women lagged behind men in terms of economic activity levels due to a higher burden of unpaid care work, such as household maintenance, rearing children, caring husbands and elders in the context of insufficient provision of social services and the low level of men's participation in care work, and the pre-mature (by about five years) retirement of women. Gender wage gaps became a matter of concern with average salaries for women in non-agricultural sectors being lower than men's by about 15 per cent. The salary gap mainly stemmed from sectoral gender segregation: women were concentrated in low-pay and low productivity sectors, such as education, health, hotels and restaurants, wholesale and retail trade and repairs, whereas men were

largely concentrated in such highly productive industries as mining, construction and transport. Women also remained consistently underrepresented at senior levels in all sectors, although they formed a majority at mid- and lower-management levels, thus indicating that women's high education attainment does not automatically lead to comparable income levels.

In addition, the deepening development gap between urban and rural areas and the vulnerability of the agricultural sector to harsh weather conditions and natural disasters put the rural population, especially women, at a major disadvantage. Working conditions of herders did not meet the basic criteria for work safety and hygiene, while return on their labour was low owing to poor access to markets and the informal nature of the sector. Rural women worked the longest hours (11.1 hours a day) but earned the least in contrast to urban men who worked the shortest hours (7.7 hours a day) but earned the most. This happened despite the fact that herder women played an important role in the primary production (collection, primary processing and sale) of cashmere, which has been a major source of Mongolia's foreign currency following copper and gold. Herders received less than 20 per cent of the end-product price and women herders received even less. Rural poverty and the high risks and low incomes associated with nomadic husbandry drove thousands of men as well as women and children to engage in informal artisanal mining, which provided for seasonal income but at a very high cost in terms of mental and physical health, and intensified people's vulnerabilities to alcohol abuse, violence and environmental pollution.

Although the poverty of rural women was addressed considerably from a rights-based perspective, it needed to make visible the substantial paid and unpaid economic activity of women as economic agents. This approach was considered as strategic for altering the dominant view of women as mothers and vulnerable beings in the social sector. But absolutely no significant action was taken to address the more serious problem of disturbing rise in the number and proportion of female-headed households living in severe poverty.

As regards political status of women, every citizen has the right to participate in the leadership of the country as decreed in the Convention on Political Rights of Women. This study indicates that the lower percentage of women representation in the Mongolian

Parliament in four elections held in 1990, 1992, 1996 and 2000 was a major step back for the women's participation in politics, especially when compared to the pre-transition period that witnessed 23-25 per cent of women's representation. Key obstacles to promoting women's political representation are found to have been the lack of political will among high-level politicians and political parties, economic inequality between men and women combined with the expensive nature of majoritarian elections and the large financial donations required by political parties from potential candidates. It was then felt that there was an urgent need for an extensive gender-sensitive voter education as well as intensive capacity-building for potential women candidates on leadership, governance and policy issues. The experiences of four elections held during the transition period have sharpened the strategic focus on the party machinery and the selection of candidates. It is a useful entry point to understand the gender dynamics and relations of power involved in transforming the process to increase the selection of women candidates and promote the political empowerment of women. Mobilization around issues was considered to be combined with measures to encourage women to participate and to increase women's chances of selection as candidates.

What is significant to be noted here is that both at the government as well as civil society levels it was well understood that without the introduction of temporary special measures such as women's quotas, gender equality at decision making levels would not be achieved even for decades to come. Therefore, it was suggested that the process of reforming the electoral system must include affirmative provisions to support women's nominations, such as quotas for the list of candidates proposed by political parties. Suggestions were also made to the Government to cooperate with civil society to raise public awareness of the crucial importance of gender equality in decision-making, change discriminatory gender stereotypes and enhance women's competitive capacity and skills-building in politics. Though these efforts required effective cooperation as well as significant human, financial and political resources, it was felt that sharing best practices and lessons learned from other countries and having cooperation of the international community would go a long way for ensuring women's and men's de facto equality in the Mongolian politics. The National Programme for the Advancement of Women has paid attention to this direction not only during the first decade of country's transition but

also its aftermath. It tried to resolve the question of the structure, function, composition and location of the institutional machinery for its proper implementation.

Overall, it can be concluded that the discrimination of women existed in the legislation as well as in reality in the transitional Mongolian society. There is an ancient saying that distortion of women is a sign of nation's deterioration. Thus, Mongolia needs improvement in and reinforcement of its laws and policies more favourable to women so that gender disparities could completely be eliminated. It is encouraging that the improvement in the overall situation of Mongolian women has been seen in the second decade of country's transition or beyond, i.e., in the post-2000 period. What has been seen is that women have familiarized themselves with personal empowerment, advanced global education and social networking. They seem to be more actively involved in social causes, environmental issues and community development. Increasing numbers of women are earning advanced degrees, studying abroad and taking advantage of progressive opportunities in organizations such as Brandeis University's WSRC. In addition, they are now financially capable of creating improved living conditions, seeking greater educational opportunities for their children, and spending more time in their social lives.

However, in order to achieve sustainability, it is important to empower women in the economic field. Equal opportunities to engage in fruitful and productive employment with fair remuneration are crucial for women in terms of their ability to enjoy their economic rights and their social, political and economic empowerment. It is important for Mongolia to understand that the major economic and social changes, such as privatization, structural change and pension reform can have deep destabilizing effects on women's employment. Therefore, government policies must necessarily be based on gender-specific needs and vulnerabilities. In recent years, the government has realised that there is an urgent need to better integrate social and environmental policies with economic development policies, taking into account such specific factors as the small population, vast territory and significant gap between urban and rural areas. Ensuring every person's right to decent as well as productive and fruitful employment with fair wages on the basis of equality between men and women requires concerted action. This requires a cross-sectoral regulatory approach and strong partnerships between the

government, civil society, the private sector and the international community, especially ILO.

So far as political participation of women is concerned, political activism has now become much more common among women, largely contributing to the passage of a Domestic Violence Bill in the Mongolian Parliament. There is a hope that the formation of new Mongolian government following the June 28, 2012 Parliamentary elections will take more women friendly measures in order to enhance the status of Mongolian women in social, economic and political fields.

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APPENDICES

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
(Adopted at the 16th plenary meeting, on 15 September 1995)**

**The Fourth World Conference on Women,
Having met in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995,**

1. We, the Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women,
2. Gathered here in Beijing in September 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations,
3. Determined to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity,
4. Acknowledging the voices of all women everywhere and taking note of the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances, honoring the women who paved the way and inspired by the hope present in the world's youth,
5. Recognize that the status of women has advanced in some important respects in the past decade but that progress has been uneven, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people,
6. Also recognize that this situation is exacerbated by the increasing poverty that is affecting the lives of the majority of the world's people, in particular women and children, with origins in both the national and international domains,
7. Dedicate ourselves unreservedly to addressing these constraints and obstacles and thus enhancing further the advancement and empowerment of women all over the world, and agree that this requires urgent action in the spirit of determination, hope, cooperation and solidarity, now and to carry us forward into the next century.

We reaffirm our commitment to:

8. The equal rights and inherent human dignity of women and men and other purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the

Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Declaration on the Right to Development;

9. Ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
10. Build on consensus and progress made at previous United Nations conferences and summits - on women in Nairobi in 1985, on children in New York in 1990, on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, on human rights in Vienna in 1993, on population and development in Cairo in 1994 and on social development in Copenhagen in 1995 with the objective of achieving equality, development and peace;
11. Achieve the full and effective implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women;
12. The empowerment and advancement of women, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, thus contributing to the moral, ethical, spiritual and intellectual needs of women and men, individually or in community with others and thereby guaranteeing them the possibility of realizing their full potential in society and shaping their lives in accordance with their own aspirations.

We are convinced that:

13. Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace;
14. Women's rights are human rights;
15. Equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and a harmonious partnership between them are critical to their well-being and that of their families as well as to the consolidation of democracy;
16. Eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice requires the involvement of women in economic and social development, equal opportunities and the full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people-centred sustainable development;

17. The explicit recognition and reaffirmation of the right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, is basic to their empowerment;
18. Local, national, regional and global peace is attainable and is inextricably linked with the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels;
19. It is essential to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes, at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women;
20. The participation and contribution of all actors of civil society, particularly women's groups and networks and other non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, in cooperation with Governments, are important to the effective implementation and follow-up of the Platform for Action;
21. The implementation of the Platform for Action requires commitment from Governments and the international community. By making national and international commitments for action, including those made at the Conference, Governments and the international community recognize the need to take priority action for the empowerment and advancement of women.

We are determined to:

22. Intensify efforts and actions to achieve the goals of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the end of this century;
23. Ensure the full enjoyment by women and the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms;
24. Take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and the girl child and remove all obstacles to gender equality and the advancement and empowerment of women;
25. Encourage men to participate fully in all actions towards equality;
26. Promote women's economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes

of poverty through changes uneconomic, ensuring equal access for all women, including those in rural areas, as vital development agents, to productive resources, opportunities and public services;

27. Promote people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through the provision of basic education, life-long education, literacy and training, and primary health care for girls and women;
28. Take positive steps to ensure peace for the advancement of women and, recognizing the leading role that women have played in the peace movement, work actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, and support negotiations on the conclusion, without delay, of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which contributes to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects;
29. Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls;
30. Ensure equal access to and equal treatment of women and men in education and health care and enhance women's sexual and reproductive health as well as education;
31. Promote and protect all human rights of women and girls;
32. Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people;
33. Ensure respect for international law, including humanitarian law, in order to protect women and girls in particular;
34. Develop the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhance their role in the development process.

We are determined to:

35. Ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets, as a means to further the advancement and empowerment of women and girls, including through the

enhancement of their capacities to enjoy the benefits of equal access to these resources, interalia, by means of international cooperation;

36. Ensure the success of the Platform for Action, which will require a strong commitment on the part of Governments, international organizations and institutions at all levels. We are deeply convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Equitable social development that recognizes empowering the poor, particularly women living in poverty, to utilize environmental resources sustainably is a necessary foundation for sustainable development. We also recognize that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice. The success of the Platform for Action will also require adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources for the advancement of women; financial resources to strengthen the capacity of national, sub regional, regional and international institutions; a commitment to equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal opportunities and to the equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy-making processes; and the establishment or strengthening of mechanisms at all levels for accountability to the world's women;
37. Ensure also the success of the Platform for Action in countries with economies in transition, which will require continued international cooperation and assistance;
38. We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the following Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspectives reflected in all our policies and programmes. We urge the United Nations system, regional and international financial institutions, other relevant regional and international institutions and all women and men, as well as non-governmental organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, and all sectors of civil society, in cooperation with Governments, to fully commit themselves and contribute to the implementation of this Platform for Action.

List of Mongolian Women's Organisations

NGOs	Aims and Objectives	Address
Democracy and Women	Democracy and Women works for encouraging women's participation in the economic, social and political life. It also promotes women's active involvement in the policy formulation, decision-making process and monitoring the policy implementation as well as influencing in social psychology.	P.O.B 24/740 Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Tel: (976-1) 313162, 352288 Fax: (976-1) 320210 Email: unenbat@magicnet.mn
Federation of University Women of Mongolia	It encourages women with high education to further improve their political, economic and legal education and facilitates them level up at the international standard. It also promotes women in decision-making and management positions.	Communication Information Technical Institute, Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar Tel: (976-1) 322547, 455066 Fax: (976) 1-458589 Email: noyun@hotmail.com
Foundation for Empowerment of Rural Women (FERW)	The foundation seeks to facilitate improving women's political, legal and economic education for increasing the representation of women in the local self-governance.	R-203, The Government House, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Mailing Address: Ulaanbaatar- 46 /673 Tel: 976-1- 329728 Fax: 976-1-322866 Email: otgonbayarch@mail.parl.gov.mn Web: http://www.owc.org.mn/
Gender Center for Sustainable Development	A national autonomous, non-profit and non-governmental organization founded in 1995 as the Women's Information and Research Center. The Center's main goal is to promote gender equality and support human development by mainstreaming gender issues into social, economic, political planning and programming in Mongolia.	Peace Avenue-5, UB City Veteran;s House, 1st Floor, No. 15, GCSD, Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar-48 Telefax: (976-11) 325627 Email: wirc@magicnet.mn Web: http://www.wirc.mn/
Liberal Women's Brain Pool - LEOS	Promotes women's equal participation in the country's political, social and economic policy formulation, planning and decision-making and train women in decision-making and management. It also works for strengthening	Sukhbaatar street #7, Ulaanbaatar-46, Mongolia Mailing Address: Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar 13, Center Post Office Box-99, LEOS

	women's capacity and skills for the country's economic and social development.	Phone: (976-1) 328558 Fax: (976-1) 372865 Email: leos@magicnet.mn Web: http://www.hri.ca/organizations/viewOrg.asp?ID=8333
Mongolian Women's NGO Coalition	MWNC is a non-governmental organization that focuses on increasing women's influence in decision-making. It implemented a nationwide program during the 2000 national and local elections to increase the number of women in elective and appointed positions.	Room 301, Baga-toiruu 37-B, Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar-13, Mongolia Telefax: (976-1) 328798 Tel: (976-1) 312184 Email: m_amraa@yahoo.com , mwngoc@owc.org.mn Web: http://www.owc.org.mn/mwngoc/english/
Mongolian Social Democratic Women's Movement	A non-government organization which is a member of the socialist international women.	Ulaanbaatar-210644, POB 578 Tel: (976-1) 329267 Fax: (976-1) 322055
Mongolian Women's Federation	Promotes the activities aimed at protecting women's rights in all aspects of human life: political, spiritual and social. It also aims to protect all women's rights and interests regardless of their ideology, social status, religion and nationality.	Ulaanbaatar-46, Mongolia Tel: (976-1) 328336, 320790 Fax: (976-1) 320790 Email: monwofed@magicnet.mn Web: www.wirc.mn/ngo/ngo24.htm
Women for Social Progress Movement	n/a	National History Museum Bldg R-104, Ulaanbaatar 11-20a, Mongolia Tel: (976-1) 312171, 322340 Fax: (976-1) 322340 Email: wsp@magicnet.mn
Women's Lawyers Association	It provides legal services to women and engage in policy and other forms of advocacy with other women's groups, as part of efforts to protect and promote women's rights and dignity, advance women's leadership and increase their participation in social development as well as contribute to the establishment of a legal system that is responsive to the needs and protective of the rights of the people, particularly women.	Apartment 38, House 24, 6th Khoroo, Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Tel: 976-1- 322212 Fax: 976-1-322212 Email: mwla@magicnet.mn

Union of Democratic Socialist Women	n/a	Room 405, Central bldg of the MPRP, Baga toiruu 37/1, Ulaanbaatar-11, Mongolia Mailing Address: Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar 11, P.O.B-46/450 Tel: 976-1- 321137 Fax: 976-1-320368 Email: MMATSEL@magicnet.mn
Women for Democracy Movement	It seeks to facilitate creating a favorable environment for women's equal participation in development, politics and society. It promotes women's activities during the pre-election campaigns and supports women's participation in decision-making processes.	Room 202 Mongolian Democratic Union Building, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Tel/Fax: 976-1-457591
Women Leaders' Foundation	The "Women Leaders" Foundation was established to help the Mongolian government implement the long-term objectives of "Women's Participation in Power and Decision Making". This effort is guaranteed under the Civil Service Law to provide equal opportunities to men and women.	Room -301, Baga Toiruu - 37B Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia Tel: 976-91197177, 976-9614632 Fax: 976-1-328798 Email: WLFound@hotmail.com
Women for Social Progress Movement	An advocacy, oversight and public education organization concerned with the issues of democratic governance and gender equality.	National Museum Building, Room 104, Ulaanbaatar 11, 20a, Mongolia Tel: 976 1 312171 Fax: 976 1 322340 Email: wsp@magicnet.mn Web: www.mirc.mn/ngo/ngo26/htm
Women's Section, Department of Population and Social Policy Ministry of Population Policy Labour	Mongolia's national machinery for the advancement of women	Khuvsgalchdyn Avenue, MPPL, Ulaanbaatar-38, Mongolia

National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia
International Standards on the rights of women” and comparative
study of national legislation

Article 10.1 of the Constitution provides “Mongolia shall adhere to the universally recognized norms and principles of international law and pursues a peaceful foreign policy,”

Article 10.2 “Mongolia shall fulfill in good faith its obligations under international treaties to which it is a Party,” and Article 10.3 “The international treaties to which Mongolia is a Party shall become effective as domestic legislation upon the entry into force of the laws on their ratification or accession.” Mongolia is currently a party to 40 international human rights treaties and conventions and fulfills its obligations under these treaties and conventions. To that end, Mongolia is required to include the provisions of international treaties and conventions in its constitution and other relevant laws and enforce them.

Mongolia has acceded to the following treaties and conventions on the rights of women.

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Convention on the Political Rights of Women
- Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage
- ILO Equal Remuneration Convention ILO Convention No. 100
- ILO Maternity Protection Convention No. 103
- ILO Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation No. 111
- ILO Convention Concerning Night work No. 171

Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women provides that the State Parties are obliged to undertake all appropriate measures including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women. Article 16.11 of the Constitution provides “Men and women shall enjoy equal rights in political, economic, social, and cultural fields and in marriage.” There are many provisions in Mongolian legislation that don’t meet norms and standards of international law.

Legal Regulation on Mothers Article 3.5 of the Maternity Protection Convention No.

103 specifies “In case of illness medically certified arising out of pregnancy, national laws or regulations shall provide for additional leave before confinement, the maximum duration of which may be fixed by the competent authority” and Article 3.6 “In case of illness medically certified arising out of confinement, the woman shall be entitled to an extension of the leave after confinement, the maximum duration of which may be fixed by the competent authority.”

However, there is no legal regulation in Mongolian legislation with respect to provision of leave for mothers before and after confinement.

Article 4 of the Convention provides “While absent from work on maternity leave the woman shall be entitled to receive cash and medical benefits and the rates of cash benefit shall be fixed by national laws or regulations so as to ensure benefits sufficient for the full and healthy maintenance of herself and her child in accordance with a suitable standard of living.” However the Labor Law has no provision with respect to provision of cash benefit for parents with an infant who are on leave after or before confinement for the duration of their leave. Article 19.2 of the Law on Pensions and Benefits from the Social Insurance Fund provides “pre-natal and postnatal benefit shall be given to the mother who is covered by benefit insurance and has paid its premiums and who is a state employee or works based on an employment agreement, for the period of 4 months from the social insurance fund at the rate of 70 percent of the average salary in last 12 months that the benefit premium was paid” and “pre-natal and post-natal benefit shall be given to the mother who is voluntarily covered in benefit insurance, for the period of 4 months from the social insurance fund at the rate of 70 percent of the average salary in last 12 months that the benefit premium was paid or other equivalent income.” Inaccessibility of additional benefit to a mother who is on 4-month or 120-working day leave and insufficiency of benefits for daily food and nutrition requirements leads Mongolia’s failure to fulfill its obligation as a party to the Maternity Protection Convention No. 103.

The General recommendation No. 16 (tenth session, 1991) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women “Taking into consideration that a high percentage of women in the States Parties work without payment, social security and social benefits in enterprises owned usually by a male member of the family, recommends to take the necessary steps to guarantee payment, social security and social benefits for women who work without such benefits.” There is no legal regulation in Mongolian legislation for evaluating the labor of

women who work on farming, cattle breeding, and private manufacturing and servicing sectors, and provision of social welfare services for them.

In order to ensure the equality of men and women in employment provided for by international treaties, it is required to create legal regulation of training and re-training of women who have taken pre-natal and post-natal leave or other leave due to illness caused by reproduction activities in national legislation.

“In all actions concerning children ... the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration” provided in Article 3.1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the primary principle of the Convention. Article 111.5 of the Law on Court Decision Enforcement provides “The convict who has given birth while serving an imprisonment sentence may be allowed to be with her 0-1-year old child.” However, as the provision is legal regulation that doesn’t comply with the principle of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and could lead to a violation of the rights of child, it is recommended to create optimal regulation with respect to this issue.

The provisions of Article 24 of Law on Family (1999) “A child’s first name, last name, and clan name” and Article 24.3 “A child shall adopt his/her father’s or last name” contradict with Article 24.1 “Parents shall give a first name and last name to their child based after they agree thereon” as well as violates Article 5 (a) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women “to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes”

Women’s Participation Article 2 of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women specifies “Women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination” and Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women provides “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.” Moreover, the Article 16.9 of the Constitution ensures that a

Mongolian citizen has the "... right to vote and to be elected to state bodies" without any discrimination.

Moreover, we emphasize that the repeal of the provision of the Law on Parliament that requires that no less than 30 percent of nominees from parties and coalitions be women, was a step backward in adopting temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women set forth in Article 4 of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Violence Against Women and Sexual Exploitation Articles 1, 2, 4, 7, 16, and 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights and Article 8.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights "No one shall be held in servitude," Article 17 "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks," and Article 26 "All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law" ensure the freedom of everyone, in particular, women from violence and right to the protection of the law in the case of violence.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 became a document of dual nature of law and customs that gives deeper understanding of the provisions of the above international instruments and determines a methodology for implementing them. Article 1 of the Declaration defines "violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

The Law on the Fight Against Domestic Violence adopted in 2004 was a crucial step in addressing pressing issues of women. However, there is a need to revise some of the provisions of the law and in particular, clearly define punishment for perpetrators, taking account of the provisions of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Article 17 of the General recommendation No. 19 (1992) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, specifies "Equality in employment can be seriously impaired when women are subjected to gender-specific violence, such as sexual harassment in the workplace" and urges the States Parties to take effective action against such

violence. There is a lack of legal regulation of imposing punishment on perpetrators of crimes of sexual harassment at the workplace in nature.

The Law on the Fight Against Pornography was adopted and means of fighting this kind of crimes were enacted in 1998 and however, there are issues with regard to legal regulation that need due consideration. Provision “Prostitution is prohibited” of Article 4.1 of the Law is ineffective regulation of the fight to pornography and helps prostitution go underground thus, providing conditions for a serious violation of the rights of women. Also, provision “The police shall officially notify administration of an institution where the prostitute worked or studied, and the governor of a relevant khoroo, bag, soum, or district, if the prostitute isn’t employed, doesn’t to school/college, or has no definite address of residence of the violation or to announce it publicly” of Article 12.2 is contrary to the privacy, dignity, and reputation guaranteed by the international human rights treaties and conventions.

United Nations Treaties and Conventions to which Mongolia is a Party

1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political rights
3. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil Political Rights
4. Convention on the rights of child
5. Convention against Discrimination in Education
6. International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination
7. International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime Apartheid
8. International Convention against apartheid in Sports
9. Convention on the Political Rights of Women
10. Convention on Maternity Protection
11. Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
12. Equal Remuneration Convention
13. Slavery Convention of 1926
14. Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery
15. Freedom of Association and Protection of the right to Organize Convention
16. Convention on Minimum Age for Admission for employment underground in mines
17. Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum age for Marriage and Registration of marriages
18. Convention on Prevention and punishment of the crime of Genocide
19. Convention to the non-applicability of Statutory Limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity
20. Convention on the amelioration of the condition of the wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea
21. Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war
22. Convention on the protection of civilian persons in time of war
23. The first additional protocol to the Geneva humanitarian 4th convention

24. The second additional protocol to the Geneva 4th humanitarian convention
25. Rome Statute
26. Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
27. Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Children, on the Sale of Child, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

Various Women in Development (WID)/ Gender Projects Undertaken in Mongolia

Project/Programs	Implementing Agency	Donor	Duration	Gender-related Issues/contents
Education				
510/MON/11: Non Formal Basic Distance Education (former - Gobi Women Project, present - Learning for Life project)	MOECS	UNESCO	1997-2000	Developing national capacities in the field of non-formal basic distance education and providing learners with their needs for basic educational and informative material, particularly focusing on school drop-outs and out of- school youth.
Health				
STD/HIV/AIDS Prevention	MOH	UNICEF		Reduce the threat of STD/HIV/AIDS in Mongolia by raising the capacity of government, NGOs
Promotion of Safe Motherhood	MOH	UNICEF		Reducing the maternal mortality ratio to 105 deaths per 100,000 live births; reaching 100% of deliveries supervised by doctors and midwives;
Community and Health (Bamako Initiative)	MOH	UNICEF		Meet the needs in essential drugs of children and women of Mongolia through the establishment of Revolving Drug Funds (RDF) at the soum level.
RAS/97/402: Support to Development Effective Prevention Strategy for HIV in the Countries of North-East Asia		UNDP		

MON/00/203: Support to the National Response to STI/HIS/AIDS in Mongolia		UNDP		
MON/97/PO1: Strengthening RH Quality Services and Integrating Population and Development Planning in Mongolia Program Activities – Pre-Program Activities	MOH	UNFPA	1997-2001	Ensuring continuity of activities between two UNFPA Country Programs of assistance to Mongolia
MON/97/PO2: Provision of Contraceptives and Obstetric Essential Drugs	MOH	UNFPA	1997-2001	Providing MOHSW with contraceptives based on requirement calculated by the RH-SP Mission
MON/97/PO3: Strengthening Reproductive Health Management	MOH	UNFPA	1997-2001	Contributing to making quality RH services available to all clients – both women and men – in Mongolia.
MON/97/PO4: Strengthening the Population and Reproductive Health Database for Mongolia	NSO	UNFPA	1997-2001	Enabling the national and aimag governments and research institutes to obtain a timely and integrated set of reliable data through conducting RH/FP surveys on their own.
MON/97/PO5: Fee for Reproductive Health Clinic	MOH	UNFPA	1997-2001	Improving the quality and accessibility to a broader range of integrated RH/FR services and information
MON/98/PO6: Strengthening Adolescent RH and	MOH and MOECS	UNFPA	1998-2001	Contributing to reduction of adolescent risk taking behavior associated with

Personal Decision-Making				sexual activities, including premature Pregnancy, the spread of STIs, physical abuse and abortions.
MON/98/PO7: Strengthening of RH Services Project (preparatory phase)	MOH, MMU and MCHRC	UNFPA	1998-2001	Improving the existing RH service provision through the development of a package of RH services, clinical protocols, and provision of training for health service providers
MON/99/PO7: Strengthening of RH Services Project	MOH	UNFPA	1999-2001	Contributing to the improved quality of life and better RH status of women and men in Mongolia.
MON/98/PO8: Reproductive Health Advocacy	MOH, HMIEC, PIM and NGOs	UNFRA	1998-2001	Increasing the knowledge, understanding and support of policy makers, local government authorities, NGOs and medical personnel on RH issues
Reproductive Health Project	MOHWS (now MOH)	GTZ		Involving of 270,000 participants in different levels of RH training
Nutrition Program	World Vision	World Vision	2000	Providing micro nutrient supplements to young children, pregnant and lactating women in areas currently served by World Vision.
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries				
The Rural Sector in Mongolia: Issues & Options from a Gender-Responsive & Poverty-Focused Perspective	NCGE, MLSW, NSO, Gender Core Group members, women NGOs, Researchers, Working Group	UNIFEM - UNDP (SPPD)	2001-2002	Compiling and consolidating existing secondary data and information on the rural sector.

Arkhangai Rural Poverty Alleviation Project	MOFA	IFAD	1996-2001	Restocking, vegetable production
Economic Activities				
Female headed Household Support Project within NPAP	PAPO	British Partnership Program SC-UK		Micro loans to single mother of large families for income generation
MON/95/202: Microloans to women within NPAP	PAPO	UNDP		Micro loans to women for income generation
MON/95/201: Microloans to women within NPAP	PAPO	SIDA		Micro loans to women for income generation
Female heads of Household project within NPAP	PAPO	NZODA		Micro loans to single mother of large families for income generation
Income Generation for Women Project	Peace Wind, District Governor's Office	Peace Wind, Japan	1999-2000	Training of 92 women from Songinokhairhan district, UB in sewing and bakery for 6 months.
Others				
Strengthening Capacity to Implement the National Program for Advancement of Mongolian Women	National Council on Gender Equality	UNIFEM	2000-2002	
Research Program on Women's Political Participation in the 2000 Election and Monitoring of Legislative Policy for Gender Equality	Women's NGO Coalition	Asia Foundation	2000	Supporting the Women's NGO coalition mobilized to increase number of women in decision-making positions for the 2000 national and local government elections

Support to the NCWNC for Operations and Activities, including a Gender Newsletter for Local Level Networks	NCWNC	Asia Foundation	2000	Supporting the first NGO-led effort to monitor government performance through work with the NCWNC
Support to the NCAV for Service Programs, including Shelter House, Hotline, Men's Program, and Rural Branches	NCWNC	Asia Foundation	2000	Supporting programs to address domestic violence, focusing on the proposed domestic violence law.
Support to the MWLA for Developing a Judicial Advocacy Program to Advance Women's Rights	MWLA	Asia Foundation	2000	Supporting women's organizations in exploring legal strategies to advance women's interests within Mongolia's legal framework
DP-94/1576: Decisional decentralization of a woman's NGO in Mongolia and to contribute towards the making of a law on nonprofit organizations in Mongolia	MWF (now MWA)	TACIS, APS-Italy	1995-1996	
DP-96/5051: Strengthening of Participatory Democracy in Mongolia	WSPM	TACIS, Konrad Adenauer-Germany	1997-1999	
97/7019: Strengthening of the NGO, Making the	NCAV	TACIS, APS-Italy	1998-2000	

Public Opinion Aware of a Necessity of a New Legislation Protecting Women and Children Against Violence				
Development and Education for Reducing Violence against Women and Children in Mongolia	NCAV	TACIS, ROKS- Sweden	2000-2002	
MON/97/P10: Strengthening the Capacity of the National Statistical Office in Data Processing, Analysis and Dissemination	NSO	UNFPA	1997-2001	Strengthening the NSO technical capacity to collect, process and analyze demographic and related social and economic data.
MON/97/P11: Strengthening National Capacity and Efforts to Incorporate Population Factors and Concerns into Development Policies, Plans and Programs	MOH and MMU	UNFPA	1997-2001	Making population parameters an integral part of development planning, policies and programs.
MON/97/P12: Strengthening Advocacy Efforts within and outside the Government in Support of Population and Development Policies and Causes	MOH	UNFPA	1997-2001	Strengthening the understanding of, and capacity to deal with population and development issues among parliamentarians, government officials and selected agencies within

				civil society, such as NGOs.
Human Rights, Local Democracy and Development	GOM	UNESCO	1996-1998	Supporting the decentralization process in Mongolia by reinforcing human rights and democratic practice and knowledge.