EXAMINING GENDER FOCAL POINT (GFP) ROLES TO IMPLEMENT GENDER MAINSTREAMING:
THE EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC SECTORS IN MALAYSIA

Nur Syakiran Akmal Ismail
Candidate of PhD at University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)
College of Law, Government & International Studies
University Utara Malaysia (UUM)

Abstract

The participation of women in all spheres of life has been accelerated by strategies such as gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming, which was launched in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, is a global strategy used to promote gender equality. It refers to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. Hence, Malaysia has agreed to comply with GM procedure when the population of women in this country achieves 49 percent. Malaysian's Gender Gap Index (MGGI) was used to evaluate the achievement of gender equality. It was developed by the Organization C that responsibility to women and community development in Malaysia with the assistance of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2004. Four dimensions are used as parameters to evaluate MGGI. They are (i) women empowerment in politics, (ii) activities in economics, (iii) health and (iv) education. This paper discusses the roles of gender focal point (GFP) as a case study in two selected public sector organizations in implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Malaysia. This study uses interview and content analysis. The results of this study show that the GFPs appointed have performed their roles based on the tasks listed by the Organization C. However the tasks were carried out based on the needs and interests of the respective GFPs organizations only. Similar to other countries, the implementation of GM in the ministries also faces similar problems such as vague understanding of GM, and lack of commitment from the institutions' leadership.[1]

Keywords: *Malaysian's Gender Gap Index(MGGI); Gender Mainstreaming; Decision Making; Gender Focal Point; Leadership.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) was proposed for the first time in 1985 during the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi. The idea of GM was brought forward by the United Nation to emphasis on development of society. It was then debated seriously and eventually was made as an official item to be implemented in the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The main issue focused in the Conference is regarding equity and equality. Every delegation of each participating nation in the Conference unanimously created a Platform for Action, aiming to achieve equality and opportunity for women (UNDP, 2001). For this reason, GM was introduced to fulfill this objective. The GM basic principles are to enhance the role of women and to delegate more authority

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[1] Candidate of PhD at University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)
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to women especially to handle their issues of human rights, poverty, decision making, young women, violence against women and other women related matters. Therefore, a document had been created in the Conference as steps to achieve this mission.

Mehra and Gupta (2006) stated that the origin of GM as an answer to the previous strategies that had failed to advance the status of women. GM was created to bring forward issues of gender equality in the key development activities. The formal definition concept for GM as agreed by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

> *Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.*

(Report of UN ECOSOC,1997)

The above definition has been used as the main reference for a redefinition of GM in previous literatures.

Basically, most definitions on GM are conveying its purpose of introduction. For example, GM is being referred to as a strategy to achieve gender equality (Council of Europe, 1998; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1999; Verloo, 2001). Other than that, GM has also been defined as a process of organizing, improving and developing policy with gender perspective consideration (Council of Europe, 1998; Verloo, 2001). GM refers to process of planning, formulating, implementing, observing and evaluating the effects of policy by using gender perspective to achieve gender equality (UN ECOSOC, 1997; True & Mintrom, 2001; Mehra & Guptha, 2006). For the purpose of accomplishing the objective and process, gender perspective adaptation must be treated as the most important elements. Only then, the implementation of GM can effectively achieve its aim of gender equality.

Consequently, all matters contained in the definition of gender, which have been the subjects of discussions in previous literatures, concluded that GM is a concept of public policy making. (Ress & Tresa, 1998; True & Mintrom, 2001; Burton & Pollack, 2002). Meanwhile, there are researchers who disagree with this, and stated that GM is an approach to public policy making (Mazey, 2002; Daly, 2005; Informant 1, 2010; NGO 1, 2010). Evaluation on several GM definitions in previous literatures, the researcher agrees with the opinions given by Mazey (2002) and Daly (2005). They defined GM as an "approach" in a public policy cycle. This is mainly due to the term "concept" in their definitions, which is more on depiction without an appropriate explanation. Therefore, in this paper, the researcher refered GM as an approach and used it to conduct the study. However, researcher still consider ECOSOC's definition, where the most important aspect in any of the GM approach definitions is gender perspective, which will be taken into account at every level of policy cycle to achieve gender equality.

2. THE IMPORTANT OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING (GM) PRACTICE IN MALAYSIA

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) in Malaysia was established as a global strategy for the promotion of gender equality, as indicated in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing, 1995. It refers to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. The principal objective of GM is to improve the women involvement in the development of a country. Competition with men is not among the main purposes of the introduction of GM. However, the idea

was introduced to ensure that women will receive the same benefits as the men when the numbers of women reached half of the world's population.

Malaysia has agreed to comply with the GM procedure when the population of women reaches 49 per cent. Malaysia's Gender Gap Index (MGGI) is used to evaluate the achievement of gender equality. It was developed by the Organization C that responsibility to women and community development in Malaysia with the assistance of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2004. Four dimensions are used as parameters to evaluate MGGI. They are (i) women empowerment in politics, (ii) activities in economics, (iii) health and (iv) education. Each of these four dimensions is given equal weight in the computation of the MGGI, when there is no gender inequality in a society then the value of MGGI is zero. The gender inequality is at a maximum when the value is one. Table 1 shows the MGGI for performances of several years. The index showed that empowerment of women and economic activity values are close to one, which indicate a strong existence of gender inequality in these two sub-dimensions.   (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2007)

Table 1; Malaysia's Gender Gap Index (MGGI), 1980-2004

	1980	1990	2000	2004
MGGI	0.340	0.275	0.261	0.243
Health	0.119	0.119	0.115	0.099
Education	0.141	0.064	0.046	0.046
Economic Activity	0.318	0.228	0.257	0.247
Empowerment of Women	0.782	0.689	0.628	0.579

Source: Report of MWFCD, 2007.

Based on Table 1, gender inequality turned down markedly over the period of 1980–2004, since an improvement in education and health. Women tend to get an equal benefit in education and health, but not in empowerment of women and economic activity. Both education and health dimensions point toward better MGGI value because education and health policies are well constructed by the Malaysian government since of Independence.

The small index difference in education and health as compared to women empowerment and economic activities is mainly due to the government's distributive policy in all programs and projects in the first two (2) dimensions. For example, the issue of equality in education had long been in effect through the implementation of distributive policy. In 1960, when the Razak Report was debated in the House of Representative, no particular attention was given to the school girls but women representatives such as Zainum Sulaiman, Che Khadijah Mohd Sidik, and Fatimah Hashim[2] persistent queries had forced the Razak Report Committee[3] to review their study. Since then, the government has become more attentive to the issues of women in education and as a result, increasing literacy rate among women that enable them to reap the benefits in the social and economic sectors. This situation obviously contributed to an excellent MGGI index score.

Almost at the same time, health issue was frequently discussed in the House of Representative because it is a national concern to maintain the well being of the citizens. In fact, the issues of health

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[2] Three of them were the first women MP in House of Representative in Malaysia. They were appointed in 1959.
[3] Referred to Malaysia Parliament Handsard on 8 August 1960; 12 September 1960; 6 December 1960

were brought up by the very same female parliamentarians in the 60's and new health issues are continued to be debated today by the current ones. It is fortunate for women as the Parliament gives particular attentions especially on diseases common to women like breast cancer, cervical cancer and many more and it may seem that the government favors the women over men. Medical researchers found that women live longer than the men up to 7-8 years (Seventh Malaysia Plan, 1996).

Generally speaking the women's education and health matters are prime issues and have been discussed extensively at the national level. Hence, most of the policies concerning the two dimensions were designed to suit the current environments and needs. Undoubtedly, the women have the edge in these two dimensions as compared to the dimension of empowerment and economic involvement. However, there are some gender related issues in the education and health dimensions that need resolving. These situations have made the MGGI index scores of the two dimensions to fall short in achieving complete gender equality.

Women activities in the economic sector are a subject of extensive discussions globally. Their involvements in the jobs sector have helped to increase the total household income especially during recent economic situation. In the Asian countries, it is common for women to help their families make ends meet through employment. Based on Women In Development (WID) data, women receive 20 to 30 per cent less wages than men and remain at the lowest level in the labor market. Meanwhile, one third of the world economic revenue is contributed by women performing the unpaid household chores. Working hours for female workers are 30 per cent longer than their male counterpart in the developing countries. Most of them work in unstable conditions and unimportant forms of jobs such as working from home and holding part-time or temporary jobs. Constantly, 40 to 60 per cent workers in the rural part of Asian countries are involved in informal sector i.e. working from home or holding part-time job. The international report showed that 80 per cent of the work force in the low income countries is employed in the informal sector as compared to 40 per cent in the middle income countries and 15 per cent in the high income countries. In the Asian countries, the percentage of labors is increasing especially in the aftermath of global economic crisis (Chatterjee, 2000).

The issue discussed by Caterjee is generally comparable to the situation in Malaysia. Women have been a part of the country's development and they have contributed much in the economic sectors. It is reported that the numbers of women joining the work force in Malaysia have been increasing since the 70's. Apparently, the percentage of female workers had increased from 37 per cent in 1970 to 40.2 percent in 1990, and further increase to 43.6 percent in 2010 (Malaysia Department of Statistics, 2011).

The situation in Malaysia proves that the presence of women in the work force not merely acted as additional source of income to the family but also because they are qualified, educated and professionally trained workers. On the other hand highlighted an issue of different pay scale between men and women even though the Malaysian civil servants receive equal pay regardless of gender (Caterjee,2000), This however is very unlikely in some of the local private sectors. The latest development of the information technology enables employers to advertise work from home in the internet such as type setters which is common nowadays (Ng, MaznahMohammad, Hui, 2007).

Housewives replying to such job recruitments only deal with employer through the internet and if they are hired, the employer can reduce the employment cost such as the workers' compensation, employees' provident fund, work place and etc. There are other types of work that can be done at home for example curtain sewing, cloths sewing and many more. Women involved in unofficial sector are deprived of many employees' benefits such as health, financial and etc. This situation also contributes to the inequality of economics opportunity between men and women (Nor Aini Idris, 2008).

The other wide gap in the context of MGGI is empowerment between men and women. In the history of politics, the present of women is merely needed to strengthen political parties (Zeenath Kausar, 2006). In the Malaysian history, there was an attempt to form an all Women Party but the idea was thwarted by their male leaders. In 1953, Khadijah Mohd Sidek from the Kaum Ibu[4] of Union Malaysian National Organization (UMNO) applied for an all women independent political body but the application was rejected by the UMNO High Council. It was apparent that women are needed as vote sympathizers and not as primary leader and continues to this day. In the 12th General Election of 2008, women candidates won only 10 per cent of the total parliamentary seats and this situation was the same in the previous general elections (Rashila Ramli 1998).

Most of the women's needs are relatively being ignored and only through sufficient representation in the House of Representative can their needs be fulfilled. Undoubtedly, the men have made efforts to elevate the status and develop the well being of women. However, there are many rooms for improvements and only women know what is best for them. Therefore, only through empowerment with at least 30 per cent women representatives in the Parliament can the women voice out their actual issues and needs, and this is the only practical way for women to obtain their rights lawfully.

The discussion of empowerment of women does not just confine in the political context but also include the level of decision making in the public and private sectors. Many Malaysian women are qualified and professionally trained, and they too are capable of holding higher positions. However, such opportunity is hard to come by especially in the private sectors. Among the steps taken by the government is to encourage the private sectors to provide more opportunities to women to hold senior positions in their companies. Meanwhile in the public sectors, the mark of 30 per cent of women decision makers has been achieved as among the goals of the 9th Malaysia Plan (2006 – 2010). In 2007 UNDP and Organization C conducted an in-depth study pertaining this issue and suggested that an action plan is crucial and needed to hasten the objective by 2015 (Ng, 2011). As shown in research data, roughly the women percentage as decision makers are increasing in almost all sectors. For example, the average percentage of women at all level of decision makings either in the public or private sectors is 14 per cent. Meanwhile, under the 2nd National Women Policy (NWP), there has been an increase in the numbers of women decision makers in five Malaysian ministries. In February 2011, the Organization C's minister announced that there are five women appointed as the Secretary General for their respective ministries. The numbers of women decision makers of C Grade JUSA[5] and above has increase to 32.2 per cent. Therefore, the next focus will be on the private sectors with the aim of reaching a 30 per cent of women decision makers. Based on the overall discussions, Malaysia must concentrate to implement GM seriously in all dimensions to achieve equilibrium in the MGGI. However, the scope of discussion of GM implementation in this paper is limited to the public sector only.

Nevertheless, Malaysia has shown a commendable effort of GM implementation in the public sectors through the appointment of GFP in every public organization. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of GM implementation, the roles of GFP in two organizations that have been chosen as case study will be analyzed.

3. RATIONALE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF GFP

Organization C has designated a focal point as the basis for the configuration of nation development in achieving gender equality. Towards achieving this mission, Organization C claimed that they have planned and carried out various programmes and projects including gender sensitivity programmes, skills training, awareness on women's rights, women and ICT, education and comprehension of civil

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[4] Kaum Ibu Malaya, later known as Wanita UMNO, which is the women's wing of UMNO
[5] Premier Group in Public Sector

and syariah laws, entrepreneurial programmes, gender budget analysis pilot project, gender disaggregated information system (GDIS), and gender mainstreaming programme.

In addition, the post of GFP was suggested to perform the need of Eliminating of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Beijing Plan of Action. According to the need of CEDAW and Beijing Plan of Action, has given special attention to the issues of women in the areas of (i) Women and poverty; (ii) Education and training of women; (iii) Women and health; (iv) Violence against women; (v) Women and the economy; (vi)Women in the politics and decision making; (vii) Women and the media; (viii) Basic rights of women; (ix) Women and the environment; (x) Development of the young women; and (xi) Strengthening the mechanisms for the advancement of women. The issues of the advancement of women and gender equality are cross-cutting and require the involvement of all parties concerned specifically in the specialty areas. In addition, the cooperation and support from all organizations and relevant government agencies are also required to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the implementation of various programmes and projects initiated by the Organization C, such as the gender budget analysis pilot project, the gender-disaggregated information system (GDIS) and gender mainstreaming implementation efforts.

These projects are vital and will form the premise upon which the success of other programmes for the advancement of women will be determined. Besides that the Organization C also requires the cooperation and support from other ministries and various government agencies to ensure the success of the gender mainstreaming implementation programme which integrates gender perspective to all levels of planning, policy making, and implementation of government activities. Their involvement will also assist the government efforts to increase the knowledge and awareness of planners, policy makers and implementers through gender-awareness training programmes and help to emphasize the importance and need of gender equality in the socio-economic development of the nation. All the matters above form the basis for the establishment of GFPs in organizations and relevant government agencies. The GFP is expected to create benefits and advantages of gender equality as supports for the government efforts of implementing GM. It will help to strengthen and expand the existing network among organizations and government agencies at both national and international levels, consolidate the feedback system and follow-up action, increase the capacity, understanding, knowledge and experience of GFPs and related organizations about issues on the advancement of women, and develop and enhance gender-disaggregated data collection and storage.

The following section will discuss the roles of GFP as a case study in two selected organizations. The case study was analyzed to determine the role of GFP and the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming implementation in the Publics Sectors. To carry out the research, structured and unstructured interviews were conducted with the two GFPs and another interview was conducted with an official from the Organization C to find out the extend of commitment of the two public sector organizations in implementing the GM.
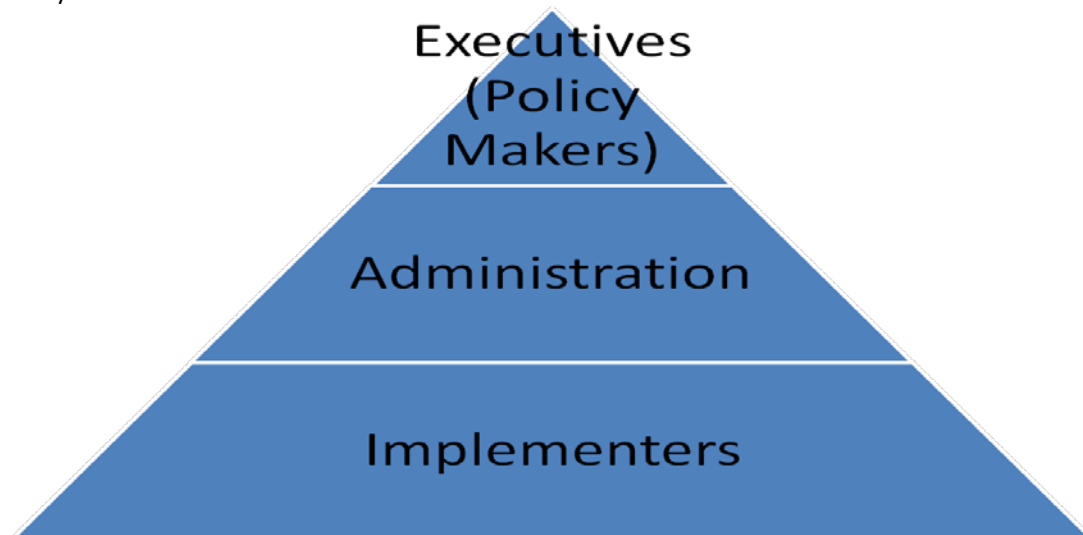
4. CASE STUDY

Two organizations from public sector were chosen. The first organization chosen is organization A which is responsible for education, while the second organization is organization B which involves in issues regarding development of Technology in Malaysia. The rationale for opting organization A is because they have been officially selected in the Pilot Test group to immediately implement GM but B is not. However, both organizations have their own GFPs, executing the tasks of GM related process in Malaysia. Organization A was chosen as case study in this research because majority of the staffs are female. Based on recent statistics, there are 279,545 female employees as compared to 127,171 male employees. However, the men dominated the decision making groups and the government policy of thirty percent women empowerment has yet to be achieved. According to Yahya Don (2007), the formation of administration structure and organization in Malaysia is based on political system and

governmental administration that reflects an employment of a centralized administrative system throughout the country. The administrative structure of organization A consists of five levels: (i) executive; (ii) management; (iii) supervision; (iv) technical and (v) implementation which are further categorized according to four administrative levels: (i) Federal Level; (ii) State Level; (iii) District Level and; (iv) Provider Service Level.
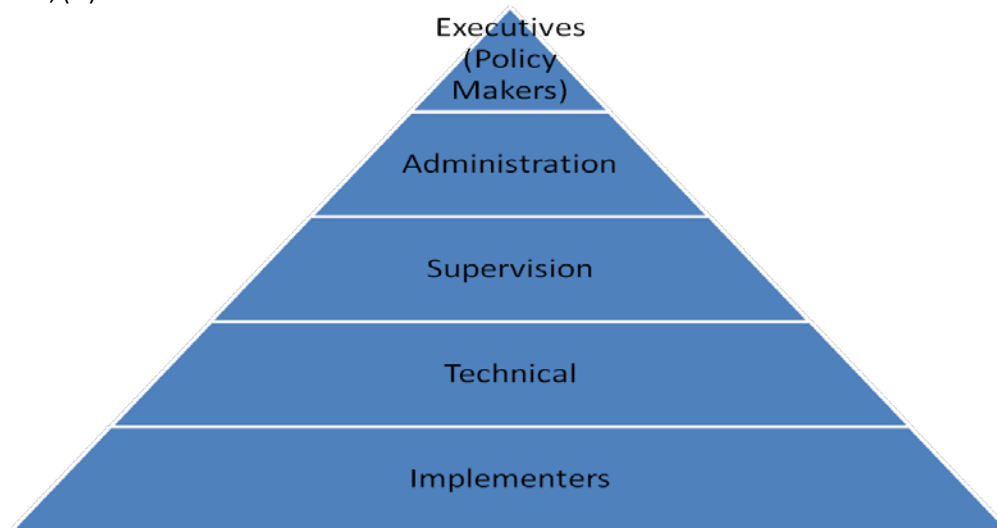
Hierarchy of Organization A

The layers in the diagram above clearly indicate the extensive of organization A structure. However, emphasis will only be given at the executive level of the A administration for the purpose of this study.

Hierarchy of Organization B

Organization B was chosen as the second organization for the case study as the number of female staffs in the decision making groups exceeded thirty percents and the Secretary General at the time of this study is also a woman. Organization B adopts the centralized administration system within all of its departments monitored by the headquarters. All of the organizational policies are made at the executive level. While at the implementation level, in terms of national technological advancement,

organization B has authorized its departments, statutory bodies and agencies to carry out the enforcement. To accomplish the objective, the researcher had interviewed the GFPs (GFP A1 from organization A and GFP B1 from Organization B) and the GFP committee (GFP A2 from A and GFP B2 from B) to identify their actual roles in the context of GM. Based on the findings, both of the organizations selected have appointed their respective GFPs as required. The GFPs were appointed, based on the current needs of that time, among the decision markers of Grade 54. The two GFPs were appointed by the Deputy Secretary General of their respective ministries, and their appointments were then forwarded to Organization C. However, both GFPs were still new to their responsibilities especially in the organization B, and the two GFPs are supported by aides; GFP A1 is assisted by GFP A2 while GFP B1 is assisted by GFP B2 and GFP B3.

In general, the main purposes of GFPs appointment in every government organizations is to promote GM and be attentive to issues pertaining to gender and are expected to play active role in the effort of gender perspective integration in policy making; legislations and regulations; planning and implementation of programmes at their respective organizations. GFP is one of the many needs proposed by the Platform of Action in the Beijing Declaration 1995. UNESCO as an international organization is responsible to oversee the implementation of GM in every country that has obliged to execute it. Compelling to the Beijing Declaration, Malaysia has listed out the role of GFPs according to the country's needs and suitability (Annette Jali Lova, 2005).

Organization C has prepared a list of tasks for the GFPs to perform with the main role of assisting the government to implement the National Policy on Women (NPW), Plan of Action on the Advancement of Women and other government women related development policies. Accordingly, organization A had conducted a discussion with regards to the NPW and gender related issues in their organization. The reason for conducting the discussion was because they are committed to fulfill the requirement of Organization C in the pilot test group. However, the discussion of the NPW was still new and only occurred once in April 2010 because they claimed that they did not find or face any real issues in gender within their organizations. Wendoh & Wallace (2002), explained that most of the communities in their studied countries are ignorant to issues in gender and unaware of gender equality. Therefore, it is difficult to have an open discussion regarding the matters above, especially with the men. The same situation occurred in organization A when gender issues are not regard as critical issues. Previously, a research conducted by a consultant group found that organization A had denied the existence of gender issues because majority of the staffs are women (Malaysia's Expert Gender, 2010). The exceeding numbers of female staffs as compared to the male staffs gave an impression that women have already claimed their rights and therefore gender equality had been achieved. Unfortunately, during an NPW related meeting, several gender issues were raised by the GFP and only then the executives of organization A realized that gender equality is far from over. This situation concluded that the role of GFP is important to highlight issues of gender in an organization.

The result of the discussion in the meeting above showed that the awareness of issues in gender have paved the way for a GM related approach to be utilized in any organizations meeting. In this situation according to Daly (2005), the basis for GM is to be used as strategy of changes to identify gender inequalities in organization's culture, process and structure particularly related directly to the policy decision making.

GFPs are also required to assist the officials in charge of gender budget or the Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) and ensure a smooth implementation analysis in the organization. The findings indicated that organization A employs a complete GRB as compared to organization B. GFP A1 confirmed that his organization practices GRB. She explained that the GRB is conducted to suit the needs of the clients of both men and women and the gender financial requirement differs between the town and the rural areas. She added that the GRB is created based on gender and to ensure all the clients remain in their service operation system.

Apart from the responsibility of service operation system associated to the large numbers of female and male clients/recipients, another reason for the implementation of GRB in organization A is because they were selected as a pilot test for the implementation of GM in Malaysia. However, not all programs and project are involved but only based on certain needs. Meanwhile, organization B did not officially practice GRB as they were not involved in the pilot test. Since the GFP is responsible for organization B personnel career development planning, the GFP indirectly employ part of GRB. The GFP sent female staffs in twos and allocated higher fund for their training course abroad to ensure their safety but only one male staff was sent in the year before.

GFPs also function as coordinators to prepare input and data according to the fraction of gender in their respective organizations. Then, the input and data will be handed over to the Organization C as they are the main GFP for the collections of input and data on gender for the whole country. Findings showed that both of the organizations committed well to the task. The reports indicated that most activities and programmes presented the statistics according to gender aggregate. However, the statistics indicated that it only fulfill the critical needs base on the core business of the organization. This is based on the following statements;

> *On the perspective of input, the data is required but not (covering) the whole organization.*

(GFP B2)

Besides that, the report of organization A, does not show any gender aggregate related to the support system such as the human resource training development for staffs. Likewise, in organization B, their report only indicates gender aggregate based on the issues in their research. There is too few organizations formed in a gender awareness structure. For this reason, GM implementation can only be achieved through the authority of senior officials of the organizations. However, such authority is mainly used to suit and fulfill the interest of the organizations' core business (Rao, & Kelleher, 2005),.

Apart from the above, the GFPs must produce report consisting of input on gender issues under their respective organizations' jurisdiction. A report made by the organization C confirmed to the task executed by both GFPs in the two organizations. These forms of feedbacks must be submitted to organization C during the periodic meeting, twice a year and it is imperative for the GFPs to attend such meeting. Both the GFPs from the two organizations have attended the meeting based on the following statements;

> *When I attended the GFPs meeting previously, my superior (GFP A1) said that we have no gender issues. Last year, after the meeting, my superior noted that something must be done about the gender (issues).*

(GFP A2)

> *Yes, if they call us for a meeting then we will go. Call with regards to our core business.*

(GFP B1)

Other tasks of GFPs is to give input for the preparation of speeches, notes, interventions or reports to be presented by the Malaysian delegates to international conferences or meetings. Sometimes the GFPs must attend the international events as delegates if they are required to do so. As for organization A, it is part of their responsibilities to submit reports on the country's development to UNESCO. They had once submitted the report in an international event in Bangkok and their presence was as the representatives of organization C. Effective GM implementation in a organization is also

part of GFP responsibility. Therefore, GFPs need to assist a smooth implementation initiative of GM in their respective organizations. In order to accomplish their tasks, GFPs must provide feedbacks to organization C, as the principal coordinator, at a given time. Feedbacks such as achievements, constraints and problems faced by the organization and its agencies while implementing the NPW, Plan of Action and the implementation of international convention or resolution obliged by Malaysia. Based on the interview conducted, both ministries have acted according to the requirement above. organization A, responded more on the needs of CEDAW. In organization B, they had meetings discussing the plan of action regarding women in their core business. The statement is as below;

> *We have involved with it and created a workshop for developing plan of action. This means that there is a well documented plan of action for five years.*

(GFP B2)

However, reference to the organization C showed that they did not receive any plan of action from organization B. This can concluded that organization B claim on conducting plan of action is most likely to fulfill the needs of their core business rather than a fulfillment of GFP. On the other hand, even though organization A has fulfilled its commitment towards the needs of organization C but they are yet to come up with a plan of action. The statement is as below;

> *There are many constraints; we have yet to form a plan of action.*

(GFP A2)

Organization C confirmed that they have not received any Plan of Action related to GFPs tasks of promoting gender issues from organization A. Finally, GFPs must attend training courses to enhance their capacity, knowledge and experience with involving issues of women and gender development in order for them to implement GM in a more effective manner. Courses and training programmes are prepared by the organization C, Civil Administration Institute (INTAN) and any government or non-government agencies that have the expertise and knowledge of the roles of GFP and gender related issues. Both GFPs in the two organizations have performed this role.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the overall findings, GFPs have committed to the responsibilities as required by the organization C. However, the tasks that were carried out were merely to fulfill the physical organization C requirements and not fully promoting the actual issues in gender at their organizations. The same situation had occurred in the study conducted by Daly (2005) in Belgium and Ireland. The two countries have placed different set of responsibilities of GM implementation to each of their ministry. Typically, it was not a total GM implementation but only took place at the development level.

In fact, a close observation revealed that the GM approach was not being fully spread to the whole organization. Focuses are only given to matters related to their core business and not to their overall activities. Such situation occurred in the study of Sen (2000) on the Ministry of Finance, India, where much attention were directed at the economic variables rather than the social aspects. An apparent reason is mainly due to generating financial gains rather than fulfilling the socials needs.

In the context of GM implementation, the practice in Malaysia is almost identical to the practice in Belgium and Ireland as pointed out by Daly (2005), the responsibilities for GM accomplishment were distributed to the ministries based on their objectives. However, the practice of GM in Malaysia differs slightly because the organization C acted as the principal GFP and assisted by other GFPs in

other organizations. GFPs appointed among the head of departments have their own set of duties. Due to this, they were unable to perform their roles as GFPs effectively as required by the organization C. In fact, the GM implementation was not widespread in their organizations (Ng, 2011). Most of the time, the GM implementation was only focus on the main service operations. Generally, an effective GM implementation in an organization requires a GFP to function more like a manager rather than a leader. There are significant functions differences between a manager and a leader even though the two are close-knitted. According to Ab. Wahab Mat et al (2007),

> *Managing has a wider scope comparing to leading and focuses on behavioral and non-behavioral issues. However, not all managers are leaders. A successful leader must have leadership characteristics.*

As mentioned by Ab. Wahab et al (2007), the first difference between a manager and a leader lies in their position in an organization. The two respective GFPs accepted their appointment in a formal process; therefore they will perform the new tasks in a formal way and act as managers rather than leaders. If they are leaders, they still have to perform their new tasks but in an informal way and will be more responsible. This is the second difference between a manager and a leader where the latter will carry out the functions of a GFP as he would perform his duties as the head of an organization. Personal characteristics, in this case of GFP functions, will encourage, persuade and influence others to work and commit towards achieving gender equality. But on the other hand, the two GFPs act as managers who focus more on the administrative functions which is clearly not based on their personal characteristics.

Next, the roles of GFP are deemed to be as additional tasks of a manager because the appointed GFPs seem to be passive in their effort and did not emphasize the method or approach to accomplish its objectives. But if they acted as leader, they will respond and be more receptive regarding gender issues in their organizations. They will seek out practical approaches to address gender issues in order to achieve the objective of gender equality. This form of innovative behavior will eventually influence subordinates to be receptive of gender issues in a gender oriented environment. Unfortunately, this positive situation might not take place if the two GFPs lack the motivation in the effort of effectively performing the GFP's role.

Based on the pitfalls in the appointment of GFP, the researcher suggested that such appointment to be on an open and voluntarily basis. Gender issues are mostly treated as trivial especially regarding women. So, in order for gender issues to be brought forth, an appointed GFP must be receptive of the issues. Kirkpatrick and Lock's trait theory (1996) listed six traits of a leader. These traits will determine a probable and suitable candidate to carry out the roles of GFP effectively. The six traits are; (1) drive; GFP as a leader should have the determination to achieve gender equality in their organization. They will commit to achieve successful objective; (2) GFP should have the aspiration to persuade others to be opened up to gender related issues in their organization. GFP should portray willingness to be responsible and to address gender issues appropriately; (3) GFP should be honest and transparent while conducting the responsibilities and roles of a GFP to discover gender issues within the organizations and take appropriate actions to solve specific problems; (4) GFP should have high confidence while performing his tasks so that subordinates and colleagues will view that gender issues are as important as other pressing matters; (5) GFP must be wise to handle organization's information especially regarding gender aggregate; (6) finally, a GFP should have the knowledge regarding his role and tasks. Obviously, a GFP should know the basis of gender issues and feminist issues in order for him to execute his roles accordingly.

Based on the GFP tasks list, it is clear that its job responsibility cannot be considered as secondary but a heavy burden to promote the roles and tasks of a GFP and to bring changes to the organization. The

changes are with regards to transforming the organization to a more gender friendly in all of its activities. For this reason, every organization should give a special recognition to the roles of GFPs in order for them to function efficiently. The organization C should reassess the role of GFP and give a complete support so that GFP may efficiently achieve the objective of gender equality.

6. **CONCLUSION**

The evolution of women development has taken place in Malaysia. The awareness for the advancement started at home during their early age. Moreover, the international women movement has contributed much and help gave a momentum for the women development movement in Malaysia. Participations to the international conferences on women also influence the local women development movements. GM has been a choice of Malaysia as a tool for empowering women and eventually achieving gender equality.

Actually Malaysia has long been an advocate of GM in terms of its implementation and practice. There are so many evidences to support these such as the establishment of agencies, policies and institutions with the purpose to help fulfill the needs and support the development of the Malaysian women. Inevitably, effective implementation requires cooperation from many parties concerned. Hence the organization C has appointed GFP in every public organization and extended a proposal of the same agenda to the private organizations. The focus of this paper is the study of the appointment and roles of GFP in the public sectors which is imperative and regarded as an effective and efficient method to promote and implement GM.

The results of the research showed that the GFPs appointed have performed their roles based on the tasks listed by the organization C. However, the tasks were carried out based on the needs and interests of the respective GFPs' organizations only. Besides that, the GFPs also have other duties and lack the knowledge of gender issues. These situations contributed to the ineffectiveness of their role as GFPs and could hinder the overall objective of GM implementation in their organizations. If the situations persist then the GM implementation process throughout Malaysia might be hampered or even obstructed. Therefore, it is imperative to improve and refine the roles of GFP. Evidently, the GFPs should be granted with more authority in order for them to function more effective and efficiently while executing their own set of administrative tasks. The only way to rectify this is that the organization C must constantly be progressive to address such situations and the government should be more focused and serious in the GM implementation throughout Malaysia.

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