



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 27: Measures towards Gender Equality at ICAO and the Global Aviation Sector by 2030

WORKING TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN AVIATION IN INDIA

(Presented by India)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper provides a brief on the policies of the Government of India to ensure gender equality in all spheres of life. The paper also refers to the corporate policies adopted by Indian air carriers who have engaged a large number of women pilot/employees amongst their workforce. The success and achievement of women in India inspires today's youth as their role models.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) note the actions taken by India in ensuring gender equality;
- b) urge States to promote policies with the aim of gender equality and empowerment of women; and
- c) urge the aviation industry to have policies to support women employment.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Objectives of Gender Equality in the Global Aviation Sector.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	
<i>References:</i>	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5, <i>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</i> ICAO Assembly Resolution A39-30, <i>ICAO Gender Equality Programme promoting the participation of women in the global aviation sector</i> Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, Government of India, Annual report Niti Aayog Annual report

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO in support of Assembly Resolution A39-30, *ICAO Gender Equality Programme Promoting the Participation of Women in the Global Aviation Sector*, and its commitment to enhancing gender equality by 2030, at all professional and higher levels of employment in the global aviation sector, is committed to develop initiative on “Air Transport Gender Equality”.

1.2 The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of India and in its Preamble. The Constitution not only guarantees equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt progressive measures to fulfil this objective. The slogan launched by the visionary Prime Minister of India, “*Beti Bachao, Beti Padoo*” (*Save The Girl Child, Educate The Girl Child*), is a firm step in this direction. In addition, specific interventions on female employment, programmes on the empowerment of adolescent girls, the “*Sukanya Samridhi Yojana*” on girl child prosperity and the “*Janani Suraksha Yojana*” for mothers, advance India’s commitment to gender equality.

1.3 Due to the Government policies, women have made a place for themselves in the aviation sector, in both civil and defence. Today, a substantial women workforce forms part of the aerospace industry, airlines; ground handling; air navigation services; meteorology services; airports including airline operations covering flight operations; engineering; and flight safety. Indian women are contributing in the areas of drone technology, cargo, baggage handling, strategic planning, and are placed both in the private sector and government at the highest managerial levels.

1.4 Today, the Indian pilot community has 15 per cent women pilots. Similarly, 15 per cent of air traffic controllers and 11 per cent of flight dispatchers are women.

1.5 The expected growth of aviation in India provides an increased opportunity for women to choose aviation as a career.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The empowerment and protection of women to ensure their wholesome development is crucial for sustainable and equitable development of any country.

2.2 As per the 2011 Census, India's population was 1.21 billion and the females constituted 48.5 per cent of the total population. The economic impact of women coming into the mainstream of the Indian economy is estimated to be USD 700 billion of added GDP by 2025. The Integrated Monitoring Framework (IMF) estimates that equal participation of women in the workforce will increase India’s GDP by 27 per cent.

2.3 Considering the number of women in aviation at present, and the above facts, there is ample scope and opportunity for women to engage in the aviation sector and thereby contribute to the Indian economy.

2.4 Government Policies

2.4.1 Within the framework of a democratic policy in India, the laws, policies, plans and programmes ensure women’s advancement in different spheres.

2.4.2 With the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to *development*. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women.

2.4.3 The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of panchayats and municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local administration levels.

2.4.4 India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993.

2.4.5 India is strongly committed to the United Nations 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the UN General Assembly Summit in September 2015, and which came into effect on 1 January 2016 wherein Goal 5 emphasises "*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*".

2.4.6 India is amongst few countries to have increased its legal provision of 12-weeks paid maternity leave to 26-weeks paid maternity leave¹. The move has encouraged more and more women to take up employment.

2.5 **Aviation Corporate Policies and Practices**

2.5.1 Indian Airlines with the highest proportion of female pilots and cabin crew have favourable policies for their retention which includes amenities/options like crèche facility, providing office roles to expecting female employees (pilots and cabin crew), permitting flexible work hours, preferred base station etc. Additionally, these airlines provide allowances and long maternity leave in addition to the salary to compensate for the loss in income.

2.5.2 Airlines also have leadership programmes for their women workforce to encourage women in key managerial positions.

2.6 **Inspiration from Achievers**

2.6.1 The participation of women in India's aviation history dates back to 1936 when the first women pilot in India flew her first solo flight. Since then, India has seen a number of women entering the aviation arena as pilots, cabin attendants, engineers, air traffic controllers, etc.

2.6.2 On 8 March 2017, an all-women crew of Air India set the world record for the longest direct flight route when they flew to San Francisco from Delhi.

2.6.3 There are Indian women in senior management positions in aviation and other fields across the country today. India has women as Chiefs of Flight Safety, Heads of Quality Assurance, accident investigation, CEOs, Directors which earlier were considered predominately male dominated. The success and achievement of these women inspire today's youth as their role models.

¹ Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- a) note the actions taken by India in ensuring gender equality;
- b) urge States to promote policies with the aim of gender equality and empowerment of women; and
- c) urge the aviation industry to have policies to support women employment.

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