



Did you know that...

Filipino women are a strong voting force yet have a limited influence in the sphere of public governance?

Since 1938 when the universal suffrage was granted until the 2001 National and Local Elections, Filipino women took an unprecedented role in politics and governance. Their participation, however, is still inadequate as their influence in decision-making and policy formulation continues to be very limited.

In the 1995 National and Local Elections, the turnout rate for women was about 71.0 percent compared to 70.3 percent in men. In 1998, women's turnout was recorded at 87.0 percent as against 85.7 percent in men. In the 2001 National and Local Elections, the women again edged men in terms of voters turnout at 76.7 percent in contrast to 75.9 percent in men.

Table 1

NUMBER OF VOTERS REGISTERED AND VOTERS TURNOUT, PHILIPPINES: 1995, 1998 and 2001 National and Local Elections

Election Year	No. of Voters Registered		Voters Turnout (%)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
1995	18,122,994	18,292,150	71.0	70.3
1998	17,227,292	16,889,764	87.0	85.7
2001	18,267,679	17,880,623	76.7	75.9

Source: COMELEC

Although women are regarded as a strong voting force, very few of them run as candidates in elective positions. In 1998, there were two (2) women candidates of the 11 bets for the presidential race; two (2) women in nine (9) aspirants vied for the vice-presidency; and six (6) women among the 40 contenders competed for the senatorial seats. Results of the 1998 National and Local Elections showed that women won only two (2) or 16.7 percent of the 12 Senate posts and 25 or 12.1 percent of the 207 congressional seats. At the local level, women won 233 or 15.1 percent of the 1,544 gubernatorial posts and nine (9) or 12.0 percent of the 75 vice-gubernatorial seats.

In the 2001 National and Local Elections, seven (7) or 29.2 percent of the 24 senatorial candidates were women. Of the seven (7) women senatorial bets, only Luisa Ejercito Estrada made it to the Top 12. Table 2 shows the number of women occupying electoral positions in the Philippine Government as of August 2003.

Data from the Senate and House of Representatives show that of the 9,450 bills and resolutions passed from July 2001 to March 2003 in the 12th Congress, only 341 were concerned with women's issues and concerns.

Of the 2,522 bills and resolutions filed in the Senate, only 174 or 6.9 percent were women-related. In the House of Representatives, only 167 or 2.4 percent of the 6,928 bills and resolutions passed were for the upliftment of women's welfare. Table 3 shows the number of women-

Table 2

WOMEN IN ELECTIVE POSITIONS IN THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT: As of August 2003

Chambers of the Philippine Gov't	No. of women occupying seats	Total No. of Available Seats	% of seats occupied by women
Philippine Senate	3	22	13.6%
House of Representatives	42	230	18.3%
City/Municipal Councils	2,198	12,665	17.4%
Provincial Board Members	120	727	16.5%
Provincial Governors	14	74	18.9%
City Mayors	19	113	16.8%
Municipal Mayors	113	1,522	7.4%

Source: COMELEC

related bills and resolutions that were passed in the 12th Philippine Congress classified by priority areas of concern.

Last March 8, 2004, Pres. Gloria M. Arroyo signed into law Republic Act 9262 also known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act of 2004. RA 9262 is a milestone in the crusade for the advancement of women's concerns.

In the forthcoming 2004 National and Local Elections, the incumbent President is the only female candidate among the five (5) presidential bets. Sen. Loren Legarda Leviste is the lone woman among the four (4) contenders aiming for the vice-presidency while 13 women hopefuls will compete against 41 men candidates in the senatorial race.

The elected officials in the 2004 elections are expected to pursue specific courses of action in responding to the 12 critical areas of concern on women empowerment as embodied in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

Table 3

NUMBER OF WOMEN-RELATED BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS IN THE 12th PHILIPPINE CONGRESS
July 2001-March 2003

Areas of Concern	House of Representatives	Senate
Human Rights	25	41
Violence Against Women	51	37
Girl Child	7	40
Health	17	12
Education & Training	13	14
Institutional Mechanisms	20	6
Power and Decision-Making	7	6
Media	4	6
Poverty/Economy/Work	23	12
Total	167	174

Sources: Senate and House of Representatives

March is Women's Month

2004 Theme: "Nagkakaisang Kababaihan Tungo sa Kapayapaan at Mabuting Pamamahala."