

Challenges for Women in Indian Police System**Fatima Rizvi****Junior Research Fellow, Department of Social Work****University of Lucknow, Lucknow.****ABSTRACT**

In India, police department has traditionally been considered a male dominating profession. However, in tandem with a changing socio-cultural environment and an increase in educational opportunities, women have started recognizing their inherent potential and strength. Now days increasing number of women are joining the police department. However, in the existing familial and societal setup, police women are overtaxed and find it difficult to balance their work and life roles. In this paper an attempt will be made to investigate the status of policewomen as a marginalized group in the Indian Police Society and the problems they face due to their gender.

Keywords: *women police, women in male dominating profession, work-life conflict, working conditions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Police system in any society has a difficult role to play. Police generally have to deal with complex problem like murder, assault and robbery. In dealing with these issues, police comes across many children and women involved in these activities both as victims and as offender. As the time passed, the need for more patient and sympathetic employees was recognized. To fulfill these requirement women police personal were recruited in police department. The aim was to change the term 'Police Force' to 'Police System'.

In the Indian traditional society where women brought up in a patriarchy culture, it is important to better understand women's status in traditionally male dominated career like policing.

Policing is considered to be one of the most masculinized occupations of the World. According to Merton "occupation can be described as sex typed, when a large majority of those in them are of one sex and when there is an associative normative expectation that this is as it should be. Policing is a demanding job, which involves long and uncertain hours of duty.

There is inadequate research available concerning the status and role of women working in law enforcement in India, either from social researchers or researchers on criminal justice issues. This paper aims to investigate the status of policewomen as a marginalized group in the Indian Police Society and the problems they face due to their gender. Various aspects of social life consequent to the women in police system are given here:

- Work nature exposes them to criminals, deviants and anti-social elements which are against the social norms.
- The nature of duties in policing makes them work at odd hours like late night or early hours in the morning.
- Policing requires 24 hours duty with no regular holidays and work schedule. This made it very difficult to maintain family responsibility along with the police work.
- Lack of acceptance is very common within male colleagues. They find it very difficult to see a women working with them with the same status and power.

- Police role exposes women to such environment which comprises men who are considered brutal.

These contradictions in police role are not generally goes with the traditional feminine stereotyped attribute and typical role of housewife.

2. STRENGTH OF WOMEN POLICE IN INDIA

Representation of women in the police department is very necessary for addressing gender-related issues on a priority basis and ensuring support to women victims of violence as well as protecting their rights. But still women in the police have consistently been under-represented in India. While all the postings and ranks in the police are common to both genders, women are still not assigned to important responsibility to the same extent as men.

The demand for more women in police forces has been growing since the gang rape of a 23-year-old girl in Delhi on December 16. There were also 2, 28,650 incidents of crimes against women reported in 2011, of which 24,206 were of rape. Besides, there are just 499 all-women police stations in the country out of a total 15,000 stations. In 2001, the share of women in the police was only 1.83 per cent, increasing to merely 4.59 per cent in 2010.

Uttar Pradesh has 2,586 women police personnel which is just 1.49% of the total 1, 73,341 personnel while Andhra Pradesh has 2,031 policewomen, just 2.27% of its total 89,325 police personnel.

There are 1,485 policewomen (2.18%) in Bihar out of the total 67,964 police personnel. Madhya Pradesh, where the highest number of rapes took place in 2011, there are 3,010 policewomen (3.93%) out of the 76,506 personnel.

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Union Territory of Chandigarh have relatively better representation of women in their police forces.

Out of the 1,34,696 police personnel in Maharashtra, 20,062 or 14.89% are women while in Tamil Nadu out of the 95,745 police personnel, 10,118 (10.57%) are women and in Chandigarh, 13.48% or 985 are policewomen out of the 7,308 police personnel. There are 5,356 policewomen (7.13%) in Delhi out of 75,169 police personnel.

Actual Strength of Women Police in India (Rank- Wise) As On 1.1.2012

DGP/ SplDG/ ADGP	IGP	DIG	AIGP/ SSP/S P/Co m	ADDLP/ Dy.Com	ASP/ Dy.SP/ Asst.CO M	INSP	S.I.	A.S.I	Head Cons.	Cons.	Total
16	24	28	155	74	482	838	4,518	3,489	7,957	66,898	84,479

Source: Annual reports on *Data on Police Organizations in India* published by BPRD, 2012.

4th National Conference for Women in Police recommended that larger numbers of policewomen be recruited in order to both empower the role of women in the police force as well as to raise interest in the fight against violence against women and the family. Yet, in spite of the efforts, policewomen remain significantly less in comparison to policemen. Additionally, as a minority in the police force, they play only a 'quasi- role' in department. They are recruited to do the specialist in relation to work with women and children, in reality; they only assist the male officer when such problems are dealt with.

3. CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN POLICE

This section aims at expounding on the conditions of women in police force; does gender biasness conquer in the police force? What situations are women police forced to tolerate with in performance of their duties? Some of the issues that have been identified as what women police go through include: lack of acceptance, Work Stress, Uncertain role in department Work-family imbalance, Lack of Job Satisfaction, sexual harassment and working conditions which include inadequate welfare measures insufficient facilities, uncertain working hours and leaves rules.

3.1 Non-acceptance

Major obstacle for policewomen is society's traditional attitudes regarding women's role in society; an attitude which becomes more problematic as these women work in a male-dominated field. While on the other hand, Women in the police have not been fully accepted by their male counterparts too. Many men in the police service are not comfortable with women colleagues or subordinates; show a tendency to not recruit women as colleagues or subordinates; and do not take women's opinions and ideas seriously (Sahgal, 2007). Female only police stations as a way to promote the entry of women into the police force are also adopted by some countries.

3.2 Work Stress

Policing is considered one of the major stressed occupations because of the irregular working hours, lack of holidays, hierarchic pressure and deal with anti-social element. For police officers, there is evidence that workplace problems have considerable influence on stress. Wexler and Logan found in their qualitative research that when women police identified occupational stressors, they highlighted problems with interactions with coworkers. Being a woman this job stress not only affects police women's life but also their families.

3.3 Work-family imbalance

The dual responsibility of work and family affect both men and women, But it is the women who are mainly responsible for the house chores. It affects women more since they do most of the work associated with the household activities, apart from taking care of children, older family members, and other dependents. Policing being a multi-faceted profession, striking a proper balance between work and family responsibilities is one of the biggest challenges for women in the police.

3.4 Uncertain role in department

As women have started working in police department very lately, so there is always confusion remains about their role. Most policewomen are confused about the way they should behave. By recruiting

women into the police force solely to have them work on domestic violence cases, and causes related to the family which limit them to “traditional” roles, undermines their complete integration into the force.

3.5 Lack of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a critical component to an organization’s effective and efficient working. There are various reasons for women joining the police. Among them, job security, responsibility, respect and recognition, promotion opportunities and pay are the most common factors. However, most women in the police are not satisfied with their promotion opportunities and working conditions (Sahgal, 2007; Grogan, 2008).

3.6 Working conditions

Working conditions include inadequate welfare measures insufficient facilities, uncertain working hours and leaves rules. They influence the performance and personal satisfaction of a worker. Police work is very arduous, strenuous and complicated certain condition of police work like 24 hours duty, irregular working schedule, dealing with criminals and other risking duties can be very taxing. Police women must be provided with certain possible compensatory measures by way of better conditions of work.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS OF 4TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN IN POLICE

4.1 Recruitment and Training

- 30% reservation in every recruitment in civil Police may be ensured.
- Same syllabus (with differentiated outdoor inputs suitable for women) and combined training for all basic training courses is recommended.
- Induction of women outdoor trainers is recommended.
- Gender sensitization training should be part of basic as well as In- Service courses. Separate modules should be designed for men and women police officers.

4.2 Mainstreaming

- There should be common cadre for men and women in Police for all ranks so that there are equal promotion opportunities for women in police.
- Women SIs should be given postings to Police Stations immediately after completion of their training.
- Women Police Officers to be considered for the posts of SHO, SDPO and other mainstream postings such as CBCID and SBCD depending on their competence and experience.

4.3 Service Issues

- Vishaka guideline to deal with sexual harassment at workplace to be strictly implemented.
- Mentoring and awareness programs about what lies ahead in Police career and how to cope with that should be implemented.
- A resource center to be established by every Police organization to provide career information to make informed choices about future career and such information may be made available on Police intranet.

- Flexible working conditions – part time work including job sharing and flexi time may be considered. Certain jobs such as data entry into Computers may be identified for this purpose.
- Selection of equipment for use of women police personnel such as Bullet Proof Jackets and helmets etc.; to be women specific.
- There should be suitable grievance redressal mechanism for women.
- Women can be given postings at / near the place of postings of their husbands as far as possible irrespective of the type of employment of the husband.

4.4 Welfare measures

- Child Care Leave on the pattern of GOI may be given by all State Police Organizations.
- Crèche's may be provided wherever women are posted in large numbers.
- Training during pregnancy for basic courses – Pregnant trainees may be sent home, training to re-commence after 1 year of delivery and this should not affect their seniority in the batch.
- The duties that can be assigned to pregnant women as well as the duties that should not be assigned to pregnant women should be clearly specified by each Police organization.
- Basic amenities to women such as separate toilets and rest rooms should be ensured at workplace.

4.5 Miscellaneous

- Every Police organizations should have a nodal officer to handle issues relating to women in Police.
- State level conferences on the lines of National Conference for Women in Police may be organized once in 2 years. BPR&D may give financial assistance for that.

4.6 Recommendations for CPOs/CPMFs

This conference made the following recommendations with regard to women in Police in CPOs/CPMFs.:

- Permanent location with sufficient family accommodation may be allotted to Mahila Battalions of CRPF.
- Women companies of CRPF to be stationed near trouble spots and family accommodation may be provided at company headquarters.
- More residential schools may be provided so that Women Police Personnel posted/deployed at difficult locations may put their children there and concentrate on their duties.
- Training in computers, disaster management and intelligence collection etc. may be given to women SOs for their gainful employment in different stages of life.
- 35% excess strength may be provided in each Mahila Battalion of CRPF as leave reserve.
- There should be liberal opportunities for deputation to other CPOs/CPMFs.
- Women Officers to be inducted in organizations like SSB and ITBP.

4.7 Implementation

- This is the most important recommendation of this conference. MHA may monitor the implementation of the recommendations and MPF grants to Police organizations may be linked to the progress achieved in this regard e.g. a percentage of training grants may be released only after recommendations made in this regard are implemented.

- Permanent Secretariat for Women in Police may be opened in BPR&D to track down implementation of recommendations of these conferences and to handle other women related issues.

5. CONCLUSION

Some traditionalists have a rigid view on women in policing. For them women's work domain is within the boundaries of home and their role should be limited to it. Policing being a strength based profession is too tough to handle for women. But as change took place in every arena of society this field does not remain untouched by change. Women started to actively participate in such professions. It helps police women to recognize their potential and at the other hand it empowers the women who are suffering from various kind of violence. This change is still in the initial phase.

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