

CHRI 2015

ROUGH ROADS TO EQUALITY

Women Police in South Asia | 2015



CHRI

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

working for the practical realisation of human rights in
the countries of the Commonwealth

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, international non-governmental organisation, mandated to ensure the *practical* realisation of human rights in the countries of the Commonwealth. In 1987, several Commonwealth professional associations founded CHRI. They believed that while the Commonwealth provided member countries a shared set of values and legal principles from which to work and provided a forum within which to promote human rights, there was little focus on the issues of human rights within the Commonwealth.

CHRI's objectives are to promote awareness of and adherence to the Commonwealth Harare Principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognised human rights instruments, as well as domestic instruments supporting human rights in Commonwealth Member States.

Through its reports and periodic investigations, CHRI continually draws attention to progress and setbacks to human rights in Commonwealth countries. In advocating for approaches and measures to prevent human rights abuses, CHRI addresses the Commonwealth Secretariat, Member Governments and civil society associations. Through its public education programmes, policy dialogues, comparative research, advocacy and networking, CHRI's approach throughout is to act as a catalyst around its priority issues.

The nature of CHRI's sponsoring organisations allows for a national presence and an international network.* These professionals can steer public policy by incorporating human rights norms into their own work and act as a conduit to disseminate human rights information, standards and practices. These groups also bring local knowledge, can access policy makers, highlight issues, and act in concert to promote human rights.

CHRI is based in New Delhi, India, and has offices in London, UK and Accra, Ghana.

International Advisory Commission: Yashpal Ghai - Chairperson. Members: Alison Duxbury, Wajahat Habibullah, Neville Linton, Vivek Maru, Edward Mortimer, Sam Okudzeto and Maja Daruwala

Executive Committee (India): Wajahat Habibullah – Chairperson. Members: B. K. Chandrashekar, Nitin Desai, Sanjoy Hazarika, Kamal Kumar, Poonam Muttreja, Ruma Pal, Jacob Punnoose, A P Shah and Maja Daruwala - Director.

Executive Committee (Ghana): Sam Okudzeto – Chairperson. Members: Akoto Ampaw, Yashpal Ghai, Wajahat Habibullah, Neville Linton, Kofi Quashigah, Juliette Tuakli and Maja Daruwala - Director.

Executive Committee (UK): Neville Linton – Chairperson, Richard Bourne (Acting Chair), Clare Doube (Vice Chair). Members: Meenakshi Dhar, Joanna Ewart-James, Frances Harrison, Sadakat Kadri, Sashy Nathan, Katherine O'Byrne, Rita Payne, Joe Silva, Michael Stone.

* Commonwealth Journalists Association, Commonwealth Legal Education Association and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

ISBN: 978-93-81241-17-2

© Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2015. Material from this report may be used, duly acknowledging the source.



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

CHRI Headquarters, New Delhi

55A, Third Floor
Siddharth Chambers
Kalu Sarai,
New Delhi 110 017
India
Tel: +91 11 4318 0200
Fax: +91 11 2686 4688
E-mail: info@humanrightsinitiative.org

CHRI London

Room No. 219
School of Advanced Study
South Block, Senate House
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU
United Kingdom
Tel: +44(0) 207 664 4860
Fax: +44(0) 207 862 8820
E-mail: chri.admin@sas.ac.uk

CHRI Africa, Accra

House No.9,
Samora Machel Street
Asylum Down,
Opposite Beverly Hills Hotel
Near Trust Towers, Accra,
Ghana
Tel/Fax: +233 302 971170
Email: chriafrika@humanrightsinitiative.org

Rough Roads To Equality

WOMEN POLICE IN SOUTH ASIA

Head of Research and Lead Author
Aideen Gilmore

Research and Writing Team

Devyani Srivastava and Aditi Datta (India, Maldives, Bangladesh),
Gulmina Ahmad Bilal, Sundas Syed and Yahya Ahmad (Pakistan)

Edited by
Maja Daruwala and Devika Prasad

This report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

Contents

Foreword	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Aim and Methodology	1
1. Women in Police: Overview	7
Introduction	7
Value of Women in Policing	8
Increasing Access to Justice for Women in Society	11
Barriers and Challenges faced by Women in Policing	13
Making the Change	16
2. Bangladesh	19
Overview of Police Organisation	20
Legal and Policy Framework	23
Experiences and Challenges	26
Conclusions & Recommendations	38
3. India	43
Overview of Police Organisation	44
Legal and Policy Framework	49
Experiences and Challenges	55
Conclusions & Recommendations	76
4. Maldives	81
Overview of Police Organisation	82
Legal and Policy Framework	88
Experiences and Challenges	91
Conclusions & Recommendations	105
5. Pakistan	109
Overview of Police Organisation	110
Legal and Policy Framework	119
Experiences and Challenges	122
Conclusions & Recommendations	136
Annexure	
Survey questionnaire administered to women police (Bangladesh, India and Maldives)	140

Foreword

For over two decades CHRI has worked for better policing across the Commonwealth most particularly in South Asia and East Africa. Policing in the Commonwealth has much in common – both good and bad. On the positive side there is a great deal of good policing which offers good practice and easy sharing. On the negative side it has to be said that too many regimes cling to outdated structures and functioning of colonial policing that are at odds with the aspirations of modern democracies. This has to change if policing is to be fit for purpose in the 21st Century.

In the course of its work, CHRI has sought greater accountability in policing, more transparency, an end to torture and other illegal practices, the value of community policing, and the need for wide representation. In East Africa, CHRI has worked to strengthen demand for a unified regional approach to policing and published a report looking at common standards for policing that are essential for effective integration of the East African Community. In South Asia, CHRI has constantly sought to bridge the information gap between public and police and encourage regional dialogues that offer opportunities to learn from each other in addressing common challenges. Our periodic report, *Feudal Forces* monitors reform initiatives underway in the region. In 2012, we published a regional report on community policing titled *Building Bridges* which documents and assesses ground-level experiments.

In the first study of its kind, the present report concentrates on the situation of women in policing. It highlights the value of diversity in policing in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and the Maldives. It points out the diversity deficit as regards gender, and recommends measures to repair it. We believe the information gathered here will be of utility to governments, police departments and civil society to inform the current debates around improving the gender balance within the police. We believe that sincere efforts to address gender discrimination and further gender equity will be the harbinger for broader reforms in policing that can fulfil modern mandates.

CHRI acknowledges and is deeply appreciative of the support and guidance of everyone associated with this report, and above all, of the police leadership and the many women police personnel who agreed to share their experiences with us and enriched this report in innumerable ways.

Maja Daruwala

Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Acknowledgements

The successful completion of this report is the outcome of collaborative efforts and the steadfast support of many individuals, our partners, and numerous police departments. We sincerely thank all those in each country who facilitated and assisted in the research.

In Bangladesh, the kind permission of Hassan Mahmood Khandker, the then Inspector General of the Bangladesh Police, enabled CHRI staff to interview and interact with numerous police officers across the ranks, for which we are most appreciative. Without the permission to conduct surveys and interviews, the Bangladesh chapter would be missing rich insights and experiences. Our special thanks goes to the Bangladesh Police Women's Network headed by Ms Mily Biswas who rendered enormous support and help to ensure our research was accurate. CHRI is grateful to Barrister Arafat Hosen Khan and Barrister Nawmi Naz Chowdhury of Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) for their assistance in administering survey questions as well as for taking notes during interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). We would also like to thank BLAST for providing logistical support for our stay and travel within Bangladesh during the course of our research. CHRI would also like to thank Fawzia Khondker of the Police Reforms Programme for her valuable suggestions and guidance.

In India, the gracious cooperation of the police departments in Kerala, Haryana, Meghalaya, Rajasthan and Jharkhand enabled the research to take place. In particular, we thank Jacob Punnoose, former Director General and B Sandhya, Additional Director General, Kerala Police; Shatrujeet Kapoor, Inspector General, Haryana Police, Sampat Meena, Inspector General, Jharkhand Police and BL Soni, Additional Director General, Rajasthan Police and Director, Rajasthan Police Academy for their support in facilitating interviews and FGDs. Our special thanks to Monisha Behal, Anurita P Hazarika and Joy Grace Syiem of the Northeast Network for helping in the research in Meghalaya. Rupa Manglani's guidance and Seema Misra's help was invaluable for the research in Rajasthan.

In Maldives, we gratefully acknowledge the generous permission and participation of the Maldives Police Service. Our special thanks to Abdul Mannan of the Maldives Police Service for liaising with us on the survey, interviews and FGDs, and Suzeena Yoosuf and Zeema Fathimath for their help in collecting data on women police. Special thanks to Izmia Zahir (from Maldives Police) and Humaida Abdulghafoor for reading an early draft of the Maldives chapter and making helpful comments. Thanks also to our partner Maldivian Democracy Network for their continued support and helping with background research.

In Pakistan, we specially acknowledge the invaluable contribution of our partner Individualland's (IL) ground-breaking body of work on women in police and the cooperation they received on this from various police departments. On behalf of IL, we would like to acknowledge former Interior Secretary Syed Kamal Shah, former Inspector General Sindh Niaz Ahmed Siddiqui, Deputy Inspector General Farooq Azam along with other subject experts that provided guidance and needed information to the research team. The cooperation of the Inspector General of the four provinces and of Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, and National Highway and Motorway Police was instrumental in mapping the numbers of women police across ranks and districts. Our thanks also to the concerned officers who arranged our visit to the women police facilities. Special gratitude is extended to Ms Maryam Qazi (Ret. SSP), Ms Masooma Changezi (Ret. SSP), Ms Syeda Ghazala (Inspector), Ms Tahira Yasub (Superintendent Police) and all other women police personnel without whose efforts this research would not have been possible.

Many thanks to all the participants who attended CHRI's consultation around preliminary findings of the study in November 2013.

The overall research and report benefitted greatly from the review of a number of international experts – our sincere thanks to Professor Mangai Natarajan, Dr Mary O’Rawe, and Professor Timothy Prenzler.

A number of CHRI staff were instrumental both in carrying out the research in India, Bangladesh and the Maldives, as well as providing commentary and support in the report drafting process. Devyani Srivastava and Aditi Datta conducted field research and interviews with women police, compiled and analysed data, and contributed immensely to the writing of the entire report. Devika Prasad helped to develop the final text. We also would like to thank Navaz Kotwal for her input and insights in the early stages of the research.

Our special thanks and appreciation go to Aideen Gilmore for leading the research and writing, her careful editing, and all her efforts throughout to produce this report.

This report and associated research and advocacy is generously supported by the European Union and the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit, India. CHRI deeply appreciates this support and assumes full responsibility for its content.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks to the policewomen in each of the countries who participated so openly and meaningfully, and without whom this report would not have been possible. We hope this report will call attention to the huge importance and unique contributions of women to policing.

Aim and Methodology

Aim of the Report

This report looks at the situation of women in policing in Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, and Pakistan. It is based on the premise that gender equality, besides being a value to be upheld in and of itself, is a necessary element for the police establishment to demonstrate if law enforcement is to be seen as genuinely impartial. Beyond this, it champions the inclusion of women in policing on the utilitarian ground that today's policing involves functions that can be performed by either gender and there is little to support the myth that policing is a "man's work" alone. The report presents information on strategies and policies adopted by governments and police departments in the four countries to bring women on an equal footing in policing, and also analyses what more needs to be done. Most importantly, it draws on the experiences of women police personnel of different ranks in each country to give a glimpse of their realities, the challenges they face, and the larger institutional cultures and environments they work within.

Methodology

CHRI led the overall research and hired an international consultant as the principal writer. After initial consultations, literature review, and a field visit of the consultant to the region, an overall frame for the report was designed and agreed by the consultant and CHRI in accordance with the terms of reference for the research. Based on this framework, a detailed research plan outlining the nature of information required, its possible source and who had responsibility for gathering it was developed and shared as appropriate.

The overall methodology adopted in each country is as follows:

- Literature review: This involved compilation of publicly available data on strength of women police; roles assigned for women police under national laws; information on police structures and ranks; national/state level policies to promote women police; the relevant constitutional and legal framework around the rights and equality of women; review of police circulars, notifications and orders relating to working conditions of women police; review of police department manuals and regulations to assess provisions relating to, or affecting, women police; any relevant international reports; and media articles.¹ In some instances, where this material was not publicly available, such as statistics, police regulations or manuals, it was kindly provided by the police department.
- Survey: Based on the identified research topics, a list of questions was prepared from which a survey was designed that contained a range of closed and open-ended questions targeted at obtaining a statistical picture from female police officers of their views and experiences.
- Face-to-face interviews: The list of questions was also developed into a framework for semi-structured interviews, conducted mainly with more senior police officers both male and female.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):² The list of questions was also used to develop a template for focus group discussions which were run in slightly different ways in each of the countries according to the access and participation granted.

¹ In some instances, information was available only in the local language which was a barrier for the research team and consultants.

² Focus group discussions were not conducted in Pakistan.

CHRI did the research in India, Maldives and Bangladesh. In Pakistan, Individualland (IL), which works closely on the subject and has previously published three reports related to women police,³ were best suited to carry forward the research and served as our partner for the report.

Within each country, the access and exact methodology adopted varied, as outlined below. To the extent possible, however, it focused on talking and interacting directly with women police personnel through interviews and focus group discussion. It was also important methodologically to try – again to the extent possible – to engage with women of junior ranks separately from senior ranks so as to ensure they were able to talk freely and to capture the different experiences and needs across ranks. Research for this study was carried out through 2013 and 2014 across the region.

The detailed methodology followed in each country is as follows:

Bangladesh

CHRI sought permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs in Bangladesh and from the Bangladesh Police Headquarters to conduct research on women police in 2013. The permission was granted and the Bangladesh Police Women's Network (BPWN) assisted in conducting the interviews and surveys in three ranges: Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. Some women personnel from Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur ranges also attended the Focus Group Discussions. These were held in April-May 2014.

CHRI staff interviewed thirteen senior women police officers and conducted six FGDs with Inspectors/Sub-Inspectors/Assistant Sub-Inspectors as a category and Constables as another category separately in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. There were separate questionnaires for the ranks of Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Sub-Inspectors, and Constables. In Dhaka there were a total of total of 88 participants;⁴ in Chittagong, there were a total of 74 participants;⁵ and in Sylhet there were 81 participants.⁶ Therefore, a total of 243 questionnaires were administered.⁷

The FGD and questionnaires were administered in front of senior female officers and in one large hall where Constables, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and Assistant Sub-Inspectors were present. The questionnaires were also shared with the BPWN during the planning process. They organised a separate meeting with the women personnel just before the scheduled focus group in Chittagong. Together, these factors need to be considered in terms of influence over the discussions during the focus group and the questionnaire answers.

Statistics on the representation of women were provided by the Bangladesh Police and BPWN, and are accurate as of April 2014.

India

CHRI staff carried out research in India. Primary research was conducted in five states: Kerala (Trivandrum), Rajasthan (Jaipur), Jharkhand (Ranchi city and Khunti district), Meghalaya (Shillong) and Haryana (districts of Rewari, Mewat, Mahendragarh and Narnaul). These states were selected based on access provided by the respective police departments. In Jharkhand, Kerala and Haryana, the field visit was facilitated by senior

3 Individualland reports on women police include: *Women Police in Pakistan, 2013*; *Public Perception of Women Police in Pakistan* and *Male Police Perception of Women Police in Pakistan*. These are available at http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=80.

4 65 were constables and 23 were Inspector/SI and ASI category.

5 49 were constables and 25 were Inspector/SI and ASI category.

6 56 were constables and 25 were Inspector/SI and ASI category.

7 170 constables and 73 from Inspector/SI/ASI category. Out of the 73, six were Inspectors, 37 SIs and 30 ASIs.

officers. In Rajasthan, the Police Training Academy helped organise interviews with women officers and a visit to the women police station in Jaipur. In Meghalaya, Northeast Network⁸ helped facilitate the fieldwork including arranging interviews and accompanying CHRI for the meetings.

Interviews were held with senior officers of IPS rank and select officers of the state cadre at the subordinate ranks. These include four Additional Director Generals of Police, one Senior Superintendent of Police, three Additional Superintendents of Police, five Deputy Superintendents of Police, seven Inspectors, and twelve Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors. Male officers were interviewed on their views and opinions on the importance, role and performance of women police personnel, as their colleagues, their seniors and their juniors.

FGDs were held primarily with the constabulary ranks. At select places, a separate FGD was organised with Sub-Inspector rank officers. In total, CHRI interacted with 95 women constables and 13 women sub-inspectors across the five states. At places, however, senior officers insisted on being present during the discussions which proved to be a limitation. The women were clearly hesitant to speak their mind and tended to give stock answers. Further, language proved to be a barrier.

CHRI administered the survey in Kerala and Haryana with women police at the subordinate ranks (Constables, Head Constables, Assistant Sub-Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors).⁹ A survey was carried out only in these two states because the police departments provided access to a larger number of women personnel, particularly at the police station level, than the other states visited. In total, 19 women filled the questionnaire in Kerala and 44 in Haryana.¹⁰ Not all women who filled the questionnaire participated in the FGD.

Maldives

Research in the Maldives was carried out by CHRI staff in July 2013 following liaison with and access granted by the Maldives Police Service and included the following:

- a) Interviews with senior leaders of Maldives Police Service including the former Commissioner, the then heads of the Professional Standards Command, Professional Service Delivery and the Institute of Security and Law Enforcement Studies (police training institute) and a female Divisional Commander who was the highest ranking woman officer at the time.
- b) Focus Group Discussions with women police across ranks, one each in Malé, Hulhumale island and Baa Atoll. In total, CHRI interacted with fourteen women police including one Police Constable, seven Police Lance Corporals, one Police Sergeant, one civil officer, two Police Chief Station Inspectors, and two Sub-Inspectors.
- c) The survey was administered by the Maldives Police Service. In total, 90 women police personnel completed the questionnaire. The survey was administered by the police department. CHRI was not involved in this which may need to be considered as influential on the findings.

CHRI was also given relevant data on numbers of women police across islands, departments and ranks at various points throughout the research, with the final figures used accurate as of May 2015.

8 Northeast Network is a prominent women's rights organisation based in the North East region.

9 A questionnaire was filled in during the FGD in front of CHRI staff.

10 For Haryana, the questionnaire was translated into Hindi. Data entry of the surveys was outsourced. Full data analysis was not independently undertaken, but the information gathered was used where relevant.

Pakistan

Research in Pakistan includes a survey of women police personnel, and interviews with senior police officers across the country. The survey was administered to 303 female police officers (out of a total 4,020 female police) of varying ranks across each of the provinces over several months in 2013. A literature review was also undertaken.

Interviews were conducted with a number of senior police officers across the country: the Director General of the National Police Bureau, two Deputy Inspector Generals, an Assistant Inspector General, one former Inspector General and a Capital City Police Officer as well as a former Interior Secretary. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with a number of female police officers of the ranks of Station House Officer, Head Constable, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Sub-Inspector, Assistant Sub-Inspector, and Assistant Superintendent of Police (15 in total).

The statistics on representation of women provided in the relevant section were previously published in IL's report "Women Police as Change Agents" in 2013 and as indicated in that report, there are a number of caveats and inconsistencies to accompany them.¹¹ In particular, there are inconsistencies in the strength of women actually on duty, as compared to the data provided by the police departments, possibly due to records not being regularly updated at the departmental level.¹² There are also caveats and differences in relation to sanctioned and actual strength.¹³ Finally, some figures were not made available officially, specifically in relation to Punjab where instead the research team contacted, and were able to get some data from individual districts and divisions. The discrepancies noted by the team have been highlighted where relevant in the tables in that section. Some of the research on Pakistan was conducted earlier than in other countries, but unless otherwise stated, is accurate as of December 2013. For some districts and divisions, IL informally collected data in 2015 which is reported.

Structure of the Report

The research template and questions in turn form the basis of the structure of each country section as follows:

1. Overview of Police Organisation
 - 1.1 Background and Context
 - 1.2 The Numbers and Representation of Women in Policing
2. Legal and Policy Framework
3. Experiences and Challenges
 - 3.1 Attitude of the Public
 - 3.2 Recruitment Processes
 - 3.3 Male Culture within the Police Service
 - 3.4 Harassment at the Workplace
 - 3.5 Appropriate Facilities and Policies

11 Individualland (2013), *Women Police as Change Agents*: http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rokdownloads&view=file&Itemid=248

12 For example, as per Sindh police, there are 41 personnel deputed to the women police stations in Karachi, but according to the data obtained by IL on their field visit, there were 71 female personnel. Furthermore, during their discussion with women police and other senior officials in Sindh, there were nine or ten female Deputy Superintendent Police (DSPs) performing duties within that province alone, while the official data received by IL from throughout the country showed a total of ten DSPs. In Sukkur there is a female Assistant Superintendent Police (ASP) in the area which is again not reflected in the official data.

13 In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, only figures on sanctioned (and not actual) personnel were received. In Peshawar, Abbotabad and Balochistan there were differences between the sanctioned and actual strength; in relation to Peshawar in particular some of the discrepancies arose from a claim that some of the domestic help hired by senior officials was included in the strength of women police.

- 3.6 Deployment and Allocation of Duties
- 3.7 Training and Support
- 3.8 Retention and Promotion
- 4. Conclusions & Recommendations

Each chapter follows the same structure, with the addition of a sub-section on Women Police Stations for India and Pakistan.

Each chapter contains direct quotes from women police interspersed throughout the text.



❶ Bangladesh ❷ India ❸ Maldives ❹ Pakistan

Women in Police: Overview

Introduction

Police services the world over have been – and been seen to be – bastions of masculinity. Women began to be employed in the police only in the early twentieth century in very small numbers. Progress was slow in the decades that followed. Even today, women are still underrepresented in policing across all regions of the world. That said, the figures reveal that the four countries examined are significantly behind other parts of the world – developing and developed. Recent research indicates that in most developed democracies, the percentage of women in the police remains at or below one quarter, with much lower numbers in supervisory ranks.¹⁴

Internationally, lack of consistent, complete, and contemporary data on the trends and present numbers of women in police poses a challenge to tracking progress and accuracy:

“There is no single repository such as the United Nations website, where interested parties can access contemporary or historical data on key dimensions of gender in policing. Even at the national level, and within jurisdictions, data are generally inadequate... The absence of these data is particularly concerning since management of equity programs requires detailed statistics to ensure effective monitoring of women’s progress – or regress – across all dimensions of a police organisations and to evaluate the impact of specific equity strategies”.¹⁵

Whichever way the available statistics are cut, nowhere in the world does the percentage of women in the police service ever match up to the percentage of women in wider society. A UN Women report of 2011 estimates that, “globally, women average just 9 percent of the police, with rates falling as low as 2 percent in some parts of the world. On average, women do not make up more than 13 percent of the police force in any region”.¹⁶ Recent research indicates that in most developed democracies, the percentage remains at or below one quarter, with much lower numbers in supervisory ranks; and women of racial or ethnic minorities very poorly represented.¹⁷ Even in Scandinavia - renowned for women’s rights and equality - the representation of women in police does not exceed 30%.¹⁸

The latest figures on women in police, to date, for Bangladesh (4.63%), the Maldives (7.4%), India (6.11%) and Pakistan (0.94%) throw up a grim regional average of 5%.

14 Prenzler, T and Sinclair, G (2013) *“The status of women police officers: an international review”*, *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 41(2), pp. 115–131: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/36665/1/Status%20of%20women%20police%20an%20international%20review.pdf>

15 Prenzler, T and Sinclair, G, ‘Status of women police officers’, p.4

16 UN Women (2011-12) *Progress of the World’s Women: In Pursuit of Justice*: <http://progress.unwomen.org/pdfs/EN-Report-Progress.pdf>. The figures behind these findings do not appear to be publicly available but are apparently calculated by UN Women “from regional aggregates (population weighted) using UNODC 2009 and population data from UN DESA 2009b”.

17 Prenzler, T and Sinclair, G, ‘Status of women police officers’, p.2

18 In the research on women in police referenced above, the figures for Sweden were 28.6%, Finland 14.3%, Denmark 12.9%, and Norway 20% (2008 figure). The highest levels were in Estonia at 33.9% followed by the Netherlands at 28.9%; the lowest was Romania at 10.4% and Luxembourg at 10.7%

The Value of Women in Policing

“The object of policing must be that the composition of the police fully reflects that of the society they serve. Nothing less will suffice”.¹⁹

The legacy of policing across South Asia is steeped in colonialism and this endures. Often referred to as “regime policing”, its prime function was to act always as an instrument of force on behalf of the regime in power. It was expected to be muscular and macho in defence of an alien power. Its ideological moorings were antithetical to the values of the modern democratic state. It was never expected to be representative of the hugely diverse populations of its country.

Cutting to the present, policing remains colonial in law and structure. Apart from the Maldives²⁰, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh continue to be governed by the Police Act of 1861. An uprising by Indian soldiers in 1857 spurred the British to create a highly hierarchical and militaristic police force based on the Irish constabulary model. Provisions for women in police are entirely absent from the 1861 legislation, which is unsurprising given its heritage.

Certainly, other changes have taken place. In the intervening years between independence and today, all the countries of the region have declared themselves democratic republics. All have Constitutions that guarantee fundamental rights, equality before the law and equality of opportunity. All protect against discrimination on grounds of gender, religion, and ethnicity. The legitimacy of state institutions now lies in being representative of the diversity of its people and in service of them. Continuing male domination in the police indicates that achieving gender diversity is a slow road, but essential to traverse if policing is to be impartial and effective.

Right to Equality in Constitutional Frameworks

The Constitutions of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Maldives enshrine the rights to equality and non-discrimination:

Constitution of India: Article 14 (Equality before law), Article 15 (Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth), Article 16 (Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment)

Constitution of Pakistan: Article 25 (Protects against discrimination on the grounds of sex and enables the State to make special provision for the protection of women and children), Article 27 (Prohibits discrimination against any citizen qualified for appointment “in the service of Pakistan” on the grounds of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth), Article 34 (Steps to be taken to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of national life)

Constitution of Bangladesh: Article 10 (Steps to be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life), Article 19 (State to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens), Article 28 (Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and enables the state to make special provision in favour of women), Article 29 (Guarantees equality of opportunity for all citizens and prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth in relation to public employment)

Constitution of the Maldives: Article 17 (Prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, national origin, colour, sex, age, mental or physical disability, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status, or native island), Article 18 (Places a duty on the state to follow these provisions and promote the rights and freedoms), Article 20 (Guarantees equality before and under the law, and the right to equal protection and benefit of the law), Article 62 (Guarantees the rights equally to men and women)

¹⁹ Lord Scarman (1985) “*Brixton and after*”, in Roach, J and Thomaneck J (eds), *Police and Public Order in Europe*, (London, 1985)

²⁰ Maldives has the most “modern” legislation in its Police Act, 2008.

To command confidence, trust and respect, a police service must be reflective of the society it serves. Where there are different ethnicities, religions, or identities in a country – as indeed in all South Asian countries – and the composition of the police service is dominated by one or a narrow elite or a majority community, this can create difficulties for engagement with under-represented sections who may feel that policing is only carried out on behalf of dominant groups, and is thus – in perception or in reality – biased. In such circumstances, there is less likelihood of support for the police, and hostile or violent responses are often witnessed. A representative police service that serves the whole community is also more likely to treat people fairly, and will have a better understanding of the experiences of the people and community it is policing. Representativeness also ensures public co-operation and enables police-community relations to thrive.

This is particularly important for community policing models to work, but such co-operation also enables the police to ensure, for example, that it has adequate intelligence and information to help it prevent and detect crime. According to the Association of Chief Police Officers in the UK:

“Public co-operation is also essential. Individuals and communities provide invaluable information and help, supporting the police to maintain order, solve crime, and keep communities safe. Promoting equality, diversity and human rights is not just the right thing to do – it is essential to the effectiveness of policing”.²¹

Finally, diversity and equality also enrich both the police, and policing itself, by ensuring that the police have at their internal disposal a wide range of skills, experiences, perspectives, knowledge, education and cultures, rather than limiting this potential pool of expertise. Thus, representativeness generally – including that on the basis of gender – in the police must be seen as a fundamental tenet of effective, democratic and impartial policing.

Women have different experiences and realities than men. Across the four countries, because of a culture of diffidence, they are extremely hesitant to approach outsiders with their concerns – even in extreme circumstances – let alone approach an institution as intimidating as a police force. As a result their access to justice is negatively impacted by a lack of women to whom they can spell out their complaints. Higher representation and visible presence at various levels ensures more approachability and therefore greater access to a vital service where women’s experiences and realities can be adequately appreciated and addressed. Greater representation therefore serves the realisation of women’s human rights in two aspects: it helps repair the deficit in equality of opportunity to work, as well as the deficit in access to justice that women face.

Women officers, apart from being able to do the job as effectively as men, bring additional skills and qualities, and improve the image of, and public confidence in the police, as a whole. The traditional but increasingly outdated view of policing as “man’s work” is built on a model of policing that views the work as physical, authoritative, forceful, dangerous; and hence inherently unsuitable to the female physique and disposition. These powerful stereotypes persist, despite evidence to the contrary that strongly indicates not just the suitability of women to policing, but also the positive contribution they make. Studies particularised to women in the police are few and far between in the region. Elsewhere however, from the 1970s onward, research on women in police has been uniform in discovering that overall police functioning benefits from the presence of women. There is no reason to believe that it is any different in South Asia.

“Twenty years of exhaustive research demonstrates that women police officers utilise a style of policing that relies less on physical force, and more on communication skills that defuse potentially violent situations. Women police officers are therefore much less likely to be involved in occurrences

21 Association of Chief Police Officers (2010), *Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy for the Police Service*: <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/edhr/2010/201001EDHREDH01.pdf>

*of police brutality, and are also much more likely to effectively respond to police calls regarding violence against women".*²²

A comprehensive 2003 cross-country report by the National Centre for Women and Policing (NWCP) on the advantages to law enforcement of hiring and retaining women pointed out that research in the US and other nations indicated that women police officers were as effective as their male colleagues and that there was:

*"No meaningful difference between male and female officers in: their activities or productivity on patrol; their commitment to law enforcement organisations; their response to violent confrontations; their performance evaluations received both at the academy and on the job; their level of job satisfaction; and their participation in training and other professional development activities".*²³

Female police officers have better interpersonal skills and in particular are better communicators than their male counterparts. According to the NWCP,

*"Studies have also shown that community members prefer female officers to respond to potentially dangerous situations and believe they are better able to defuse these interactions".*²⁴

Women police officers have also been shown to be more adept at community policing. The nature of policing is moving away from the physical, forceful model to which women have previously (and wrongly) been associated as unsuited to, and as pointed out:

*"Communities are demanding more contact with the police in non-enforcement related matters such as interaction with the youth, crime prevention and simply officer presence in the neighbourhoods".*²⁵

Better interpersonal and communication skills undoubtedly contribute to an increased ability of women police officers in this regard; likewise research has also found women to be less cynical and more respectful in their views of citizens, and to have greater support for the principles of community policing.²⁶

Women police officers have also been shown to be more effective at handling domestic violence complaints. As highlighted above, one of the fundamental aspects of a representative police service is the ability to reflect, appreciate and understand the differing experiences within a society, and as a phenomenon experienced mostly by women, it stands to reason that female police officers are better placed to respond to domestic violence. Research demonstrating this dates back to the 1970s and has been consistent ever since.²⁷

Research by the NCWP has also demonstrated that women police officers are substantially less likely than their male colleagues to be involved in allegations or cases of use of excessive or deadly force.²⁸ That is not to say that women police officers are unwilling to use force. Research has demonstrated that they are just as likely to use force as male officers, but that the force used is less likely to be excessive or deadly. A consequence of this is that there is a reduction of complaints and increased confidence in policing. According to one commentator,

22 National Centre for Women and Policing, (website homepage) <http://womenandpolicing.com>.

23 National Centre for Women and Policing (2003), *Hiring and Retaining More Women: The Advantages to Law Enforcement Agencies*, p. 3: <http://womenandpolicing.com/pdf/NewAdvantagesReport.pdf>.

24 National Centre for Women and Policing, 'Hiring and Retaining', p. 6.

25 Sgt. Anderson, L (2003), *Women in Law Enforcement*, p. 10 [http://www.emich.edu/cerns/downloads/papers/PoliceStaff/Police%20Personnel%20\(e.g.,%20Selection,%20%20Promotion\)/Women%20in%20Law%20Enforcement.pdf](http://www.emich.edu/cerns/downloads/papers/PoliceStaff/Police%20Personnel%20(e.g.,%20Selection,%20%20Promotion)/Women%20in%20Law%20Enforcement.pdf).

26 National Centre for Women and Policing, 'Hiring and Retaining', p. 7.

27 National Centre for Women and Policing, 'Hiring and Retaining', p. 7.

28 National Center for Women and Policing (2002), *Men, Women and Police Excessive Force: a tale of two genders*: http://womenandpolicing.com/PDF/2002_Excessive_Force.pdf.

“Excessive force pay outs and discrimination lawsuits occur every day. Research conducted has suggested that a higher percentage of women police officers in an agency will decrease these claims and provide for a more positive relationship with the community. Female officers offer a style of policing which relies less on physical force and this can only assist a department’s liability in regards to claims of excessive force”.²⁹

Women police officers have also been shown to have an impact on corruption levels in the police. For example, in Australia, inquiries into police misconduct and corruption concluded that *“there was a direct association between increasing numbers of women police officers and reducing levels of corruption”*.³⁰ Likewise police services in Latin America and Mexico established women-only corps to handle traffic violations because they are less likely to accept bribes and engage in other forms of corruption.³¹

Increasing Access to Justice for Women in Society

For crimes that are experienced predominantly by women – sexual assault and gender-based violence in particular – the police are a fundamental and usually the first link in the chain of access to justice. If women do not report crimes to the police, then such crimes are not recognised or dealt with through the formal justice system. While there may be myriad reasons why women do not report such crimes, one factor is undoubtedly the gender composition and responsiveness of the police. As recognised in the 2011 UN Women report:

“Discriminatory attitudes of justice service providers, including the police, court staff, the judiciary, and health care workers can act as a major barrier to women’s access to justice. Tackling this is a vital part of making the justice chain gender-responsive. Employing women in the justice system, training justice providers and putting in place measures to foster greater accountability to women can make a difference. Approaching male police officers can be particularly difficult and sometimes impossible for women. Both male and female victims of sexual violence express a preference for reporting to women police. Data from 39 countries show that the presence of women police officers correlates positively with reporting of sexual assault, which confirms that recruiting women is an important component of a gender-responsive justice system”.³²

Beyond the requirements of representativeness, access to justice for women and the proven importance of the contribution women make to policing, there are also legal drivers that compel states to address the inclusion of women as a matter of necessity and of right.

Often national legal obligations require the existence or presence of female police officers, for example in carrying out searches of female suspects or detainees, dealing with female victims or complainants, or conducting arrests of women. These legal duties can be found in each of the South Asian countries studied in this report.

A range of international human rights standards also point to the need for inclusion of women in policing. The overarching and most forceful framework is provided by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).³³ Beyond prohibiting all forms of discrimination it requires State Parties

29 Anderson, L, “Women in Law Enforcement”, p.10.

30 Prenzler T, Fleming J, King A (2010) “Gender equity in Australian and New Zealand policing: a five-year review”, *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 584–595, p. 585: http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/38891/68129_1.pdf?sequence=1.

31 National Centre for Women and Policing, ‘Hiring and Retaining’, p. 7.

32 UN Women (2011-12) *Progress of the World’s Women: In Pursuit of Justice*, p. 59: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2011/progressoftheworldswomen-2011-en.pdf>.

33 *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>. Adopted in 1979 and entered into force in 1981, this international human rights treaty is akin to a bill of rights for women that sets out what constitutes discrimination against women and what is needed to end such discrimination.

to take appropriate measures specifically to eliminate discrimination in employment and to ensure equality between men and women in relation to “*the right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings*”.³⁴ State Parties have an obligation to take measures to address discrimination and inequality in this regard.

The four South Asian countries studied here have ratified this Convention, thus binding themselves to the obligations it contains, albeit with reservations. Bangladesh was the first to ratify in 1984 but has entered a reservation on Articles 2 (take all steps to end discrimination against women), 13 (economic, social and cultural equality) and 16 (equality for women in relation to marriage and family); India and the Maldives both ratified in 1993, the Maldives entered a reservation on Article 16 and compatibility with Sharia law, and India added declarations on Articles 5a (ending stereotyping and prejudices against women) and 16; and Pakistan ratified in 1996 entering a declaration that it was subject to the provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan.³⁵

In addition to CEDAW, there are a range of other international human rights standards of both binding and non-binding status that relate to women in policing. For example, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (UNSCR1325) was adopted in 2000. It is particularly concerned with the effects of armed conflict on women and reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict.³⁶ Accordingly, it urges the United Nations to increase women’s involvement in conflict resolution and prevention, and calls upon Member States to respect the human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the Constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.³⁷ More women in policing goes to the fulfilment of this resolution.

A compendium of human rights standards relevant to policing generally can be found in the *Expanded Pocket Book on Human Rights for the Police* produced by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2004 as part of its professional training series on human rights standards and practice for the police.³⁸ In relation to representativeness generally, the booklet states:

- Every law enforcement agency shall be representative of and responsive and accountable to the community as a whole.
- Ensure that the composition of the police agency is representative of the entire community through fair and non-discriminatory recruitment and management policies and practices.
- Ensure that recruitment procedures and training programmes are designed to recruit and retain police officials willing and able to meet the demands of democratic policing under democratic government.

34 CEDAW, Art 11(1)(a). *This article continues: (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment; (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training; (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work; (e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave; (f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.*”

35 To see countries’ reservations to CEDAW: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations-country.htm>.

36 *United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1325*, 31 October 2000: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325\(2000\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325(2000)).

37 Additional related standards include the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action aimed at achieving greater equality and opportunity for women <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>; General Recommendation 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, (1992) on violence against women <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom19>; the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>; the UN General Assembly Resolution on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Measures to Eliminate Violence against Women in 1998 <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f33f0.html>; and UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution on Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women 2010 <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2010/res%202010-15.pdf>.

38 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2004), *Standards and Practice for the Police: Expanded Pocket Book on Human Rights for the Police*, Professional Training Series, No. 5/Add. 3, p: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training5Add3en.pdf>.

- Law enforcement agencies shall not discriminate against women in recruitment, hiring, training, assignment, promotion, salary, or other career and administrative matters.
- Law enforcement agencies shall recruit sufficient numbers of women to ensure fair community representation and the protection of the rights of female suspects, arrestees and detainees.

In relation to the human rights of women in particular, the booklet states that commanding or supervising officers must:

- Assign female officers to deal with female victims of crime.
- Review recruitment, hiring, training and promotion policies to remove any gender bias.
- Assign female officers to carry out all searches and supervision of female detainees, and separate female from male detainees.
- Adopt policies prohibiting discrimination against officers on the basis of pregnancy or maternity.
- Establish open channels of communication for complaints or recommendations by female officers on issues of gender bias.

Barriers and Challenges Faced by Women in Policing

Experiences of gender-based strategies to employ and retain more women in policing outside South Asia throw up several important learnings. For one, gender-based integration takes place more successfully in the context of wider reforms. Its extent and rapidity is subject to the political impetus for overall reform. This is particularly the case (although not uniquely) in countries transitioning from a period of conflict and undergoing wider, deeper changes in policing and criminal justice systems. The complete restructuring of the criminal justice system allows for a break with traditions, systems, and the unravelling of prejudices of the past. In countries not experiencing transition, or those not making deliberate efforts at wider reform, the corrections to gender imbalance come through implementing general diversity policies or fulfilling the requirements of equal opportunity legislation. Or they are driven by the need to be more suitably equipped to respond to problems of gender-based violence by making the criminal justice system in general more gender-responsive.

Whatever the provenance of demands for equal opportunity, experiences of efforts at inclusion from across the world make it clear that the numbers do not tell the whole story. The barriers and challenges facing a woman in, or wishing to enter, policing are multiple and interconnected. This is reflected no less in the experiences of women in policing in South Asia.

Taken chronologically from intent to fulfilment of career objectives, one of the first barriers to gender parity is the reluctance of women to join policing. Policy makers and police leaderships excuse the lack of women in police by pointing to their helplessness in the face of reluctance of women to come forward to join in large numbers. Considering the abysmal numbers, there is certainly some truth in this. But there are also reasons that point very strongly to the need to redouble efforts to clean up the image of the police and make it a more welcoming institution.

The daunting image of policing as a male bastion “unsuitable” for women does deter their entry. Its masculine insignia is a natural consequence of the colonial legacy that locates unreformed policing in the broader security and military context as being only about “fighting” crime and controlling the population at large. In the four countries, media imaging of police – especially India’s influential Bollywood depictions – as rough and ready “Dirty Harrys” – vengeful, willing to break every rule, and reliant on extreme violence – also reaffirms the popular image that policing is no place for women. Cinema rarely if ever reflects the reality of modern-day policing that is often

focused more on community engagement and relies more heavily on technology and scientific advancement to prevent and detect crime than on physical exertion. This “notoriety” coupled with the notion that only brute strength is required to counter all-encompassing danger creates barriers to the prospects of women joining the police. Given the surrounding culture, popular perceptions, and the resistance of police leaderships to voluntarily induct women into the force, governments in the region have taken to setting affirmative action measures such as quotas to address under-representation.³⁹ This forces intake but equitable numeral targets still remain elusive.

Quotas, while a measure that addresses the numbers issue, can do little to ensure retention. In South Asia, as elsewhere, a bundle of interrelated challenges combining culture, policy and practice await women who make it through the recruitment and training phases. Police sub-cultures in the region are proudly and intensely male. Too often, women are seen as intrusions. Accommodations to their circumstances are seen as sops; quotas as unfair privileges necessary to assuage public opinion, rather than as bringing a valuable addition into policing. There is an abiding myth that “real” policing is a job for men only. Yet, detailed examinations of daily jobs done across policing have little to do with physicality or facing danger. The largest majority of personnel are employed in tasks to do with management, administration and communication such as recording complaints, taking statements, going to court, collating information and evidence, doing inspections and the like: jobs that ironically should be done only by women if the stereotype is to be adhered to. Reality apart, the attitude that women should not be asked to handle “tough” situations and generally cannot handle the demands of policing lives on. This stems, in part, from a genuine discomfort at being around women through the workday, and especially taking orders from them.

This may appear to be a generalisation (and efforts are on to address this at an institutional level) but this research repeatedly threw up evidence of deep-seated patriarchal bias against women colleagues. Across the region there was no escaping the endemic and deep-seated patriarchal attitudes of male police. Only very few men interviewed at the senior ranks expressed genuine appreciation of the skills, potential and value women hold for policing. Too many, however, held views like: women lack qualifications to head up police stations; they are lazy and avoid hard work; they get out of duties by pleading personal priorities; they do not volunteer for outdoor or field work; and junior policemen are to be trusted more than senior policewomen. Women themselves admitted on several occasions that they prefer desk jobs as they have to balance their family lives with their work, and this is the easiest way to manage it. However, many also pointed out that they would not opt for desk jobs if supporting policies and facilities were in place, such as a shift system and day care and crèches for new mothers. The view that desk jobs are somehow inferior to ‘being in the field’ once again draws attention to the lack of internalisation that the purpose of policing a democracy, as well as its methods, have changed deeply and retaining a predominance of men only delays the road to reform.

In a common trend across the region, though more acute in some countries than others, governments and police departments are shaping recruitment and other policies around the belief that only women should handle and investigate crimes against women and children. While all the evidence shows that women victims and witnesses prefer to share their concerns with policewomen rather than men, the overall low numbers of women in policing forces them to be clustered into these duties and once again remain outside the mainstream of varied experience. This ghettoises women police officers, legitimises the segmentation of roles based on stereotyping, and assumes that there is no need for the rank and file male officer to up his game so that it is routine for any gender to be comfortable making their concerns known to any police officer.

Policewomen cope with this constant judgement of their capabilities in different ways. Many women complained of male insubordination as well as a tendency of senior male colleagues to disbelieve a senior woman when a male junior offered a differing version. Some believe that it fell upon them to work twice or three times as

³⁹ Ironically, Maldives has no formal quota system but has the highest representation of women among the four countries in the region.

hard to prove themselves and their capabilities. Many wanted adjustments, but few expected them; and many felt unworthy because they could not cope stoically but had to seek what were seen as “concessions”. This confirms research elsewhere that shows⁴⁰ unquestioning internalisation of women’s belief that they inherently lack in abilities necessary to fulfil their jobs. Many buy into the dominant male culture rather than challenge it.

This manifests itself either by denying differences, or failing to recognise that differences must be addressed within the institution, and suitable changes are necessary and not unfair demands. Another coping strategy is buying into the sub-culture of ‘maleness’ by engaging in acts of aggression to prove they can be “one of the boys.” The positive traits usually attributed to women are often the very ones that allow them to fall unquestioningly into roles agreeable to the sub-culture. Domestic traits of serving and silent acceptance subtly morph into the work environment that pigeonholes women into “suitable” roles and “soft jobs” that makes their presence more acceptable. This of course limits the acquisition of multiple skills and restricts career advancement into the mainstream.

Physical conditions matter considerably. Any organisation or workplace that is serious about mainstreaming and integrating gender equality needs to recognise the cultural imperatives that require working women to carry the burdens of traditional roles, and the simple biological fact that women are not men. Throughout our research across the four countries, women police mentioned the family’s expectation that they must fulfil all domestic obligations even as they put in a full day’s work with no quarter given. Very few felt supported. They pointed to the need to hide any insecurity they felt within the work environment. The stresses they felt had to be absorbed alone, as both at work and at home, they are seen as part and parcel of choosing the path of policing. Simple things weighed heavily in the job satisfaction scales - like the absence of separate toilets and a place to change and rest in private, lack of pick up and drop off facilities, and standard male issue of uniforms and shoes that felt inappropriate and embarrassed the wearer. They pointed to lack of flexitime, distances and long periods required to be away from home during training as impediments to their growth within the organisation.

Throughout the world, statistics from police departments show that women are severely under-represented in senior positions. It is no different in these four South Asian countries. Contributory factors include limited experience of various kinds of policing, again due to external and internal factors already mentioned. In the four countries, it is rare for a woman to be in a key operational position, such as heading a police station or heading a district. In Bangladesh for instance, there is only one woman heading a district. In India, a woman heads the apex training academy, and one has recently taken charge of counter-insurgency operations in a state. These are welcome exceptions to the rule that sees women absent from important postings. That women accepted this, is linked to the tendency to confine women to desk jobs. Nevertheless there was an overall perception that there is bias in promotions between men and women, and their lack of representation in senior posts does bear credence to this. In addition, women mentioned that opaque promotion processes can work disproportionately against them, dominated as these processes and panels tend to be by men. Even where there is an apparently neutral merit-based system in place, where mostly men are making decisions, unconscious biases left untested are perceived to perpetuate inequity.

Where the challenges facing women are so great, it is only the very courageous and determined who push through and soldier on. Indeed this determination was repeatedly evident in the interviews with women police officers as they overcame multiple adversities at work, in the community and within their families. The need for such extraordinary effort itself is a signifier that something badly needs correction in policing establishments across the four countries. Policing must be able to attract the average woman as much as the average man, and should not require a “superwoman” to steel herself to chance this career nor require any superhuman effort to be accepted and effective in her work. The environment must assure this.

40 Natarajan, M (2014) “Police culture and the integration of women officers in India”, *International Journal of Police Science and Management* Vol 16 No. 2, pp. 124-139 <http://psm.sagepub.com/content/16/2/124.full.pdf+html>

Legislative Protection and Redress: Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

Pakistan and India have passed legislation to address sexual harassment at the workplace. Pakistan's *Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act* was passed in 2010, and India's *Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013* came into force in December 2013.⁴¹ These Acts, for the first time, define sexual harassment in law, and require employers – including the police – to establish formal internal inquiry processes to deal with allegations of harassment; and set up specialised internal mechanisms. While Bangladesh does not have an anti-sexual harassment law, a High Court Order of 2009 requires a complaints committee headed by a woman to be established in the workplace, and lays down a set of guidelines to prevent sexual harassment against women at workplaces. In the Maldives, an internal order of the police department addressing sexual harassment was introduced in 2012 which, rather than setting up any independent or external mechanism, designates the existing internal Professional Standards Command as the body to deal with complaints.

Making the Change

Police leaderships and policy makers cannot be content to leave the issue of gender equality and equity unaddressed without risking the charge of acquiescing to deeply entrenched institutional bias. This is unhealthy for the institution and taints their response outward to the public as well. Nor is it open to them to hide behind facile excuses that the institution cannot be different from the surrounding environment from which they draw their cadres. Institutions of state charged with mandates that require them to act according to the highest constitutional values of equality and equity must take strong initiatives to demonstrate fairness within, if they are to be fair outside in their response to the public. Equally, it is no longer sufficient to rest on the excuse that women won't come forward to join. Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan all have huge populations of young people. More and more of them are educated – especially women. Unemployment is high. Government jobs are valued for their long-term stability. Urban cultures and small-town aspiration are loosening notions of what is a "suitable" occupation for women. In short, a pool of potential women recruits is available now, as never before. It is for police establishments to make concerted efforts to win women into the force, be proactive and present policing as a desirable career destination – welcoming and safe – for any young woman. This will require more than public relations advertising. A strong commitment to make deeply reflective changes within is essential. Today, the minimal numbers of women and the challenges they face in policing speak to the plague of unreformed policing. In recent decades, in many parts of the world combating to deconstruct and reconstruct these environments, increasing numbers of women joining the police has been a hallmark of better policing. Those that have not addressed the issue have remained unreformed and poor in performance of their mandates.

In the four countries, there is increased consciousness of the deficit in gender equality, yet attention has focused more on raising the numbers at intake. This has not been accompanied by equal amounts of self-examination within the force about what needs to be done to assimilate women into policing as a "non-exotic" category. Efforts at genuine integration must now replace small changes made by way of concessions. Change from high policy to local police station requires political will, recognition that there is something wrong, analysis of cause and effect, clear policies to address the problem, specific actions implemented to time lines at every level within the institution, and constant monitoring to assess success and make course corrections.

More specifically, there must be a structured examination of institutional impediments. Close examination of attitudes and conditions met by women at work must inform a comprehensive gender policy with time lines,

⁴¹ The Indian legislation legalises Supreme Court guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment handed down in 1997, see: *Vishaka and others V. State of Rajasthan and others AIR 1997 SC 3011*

targets and an implementation plan linked to performance and reporting. Policies around equal pay and maternity leave which should be considered standard need to be revisited; the important feature of flexibility in relation to shifts, working hours and location should be introduced; training needs are required to be re-oriented to be gender sensitive and designed to test and repair social biases; and the cloistering of women police to only crimes against women and children must be minimised. The country chapters of this report provide detailed recommendations.

The demand for equal opportunities for women in policing has the potential to catalyse broader reforms. In the four South Asian countries, the demand for more women in policing is being responded to. But it stands disaggregated from the call for root and branch reform and comes in the teeth of resistance to overall police reform. Many see an increase in the number of women in policing as a harbinger of sharper demands for genuine gender parity that will engender broader reforms – the thin end of the wedge if you will. This is because it brings to the fore issues of discrimination and responsiveness which will feed into the growing calls for desperately needed holistic change in policing that can fulfil modern mandates and go from being the police we have to the police we want.

BANGLADESH



SECTION 1

Overview of Police Organisation

Background and Context

The Bangladesh Police was established as a national service headquartered in Dhaka in 1971. Like in India and Pakistan, policing is still governed by the Police Act of 1861.

Currently, the police service is approximately 154,208⁴² strong for a population of around 158,971,187. This is a police-population ratio of 1:1,030 people which is well below the United Nations minimum level of 1:500. Bangladesh has less police per capita than India, the Maldives and Pakistan.

Structurally, the Bangladesh Police is divided into several units: Seven range police,⁴³ six metropolitan police,⁴⁴ Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Battalions, Railway, Industrial, Highway, Police Bureau of Investigation, Training Institutes, Telecom and Information Management, Tourist Police, Special Security, Protection Battalion, and Naval Police.



There are fourteen ranks starting with Constable, Nayek, Assistant Sub-Inspector, Sergeant, Sub-Inspector, Inspector, Assistant Superintendent, Senior Assistant Superintendent, Additional Superintendent, Superintendent, Additional Deputy Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General, Additional Inspector General and Inspector General.

⁴² As per data provided by the Bangladesh Police in December 2013.

⁴³ For each of the main administrative areas of the country, the seven range police are: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal and Rangpur Ranges, please see: <http://www.police.gov.bd/BdpoliceOrgr.php?id=287>.

⁴⁴ These are Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet, please see: <http://www.police.gov.bd/content.php?id=282>.



The Bangladesh Police is a centralised police force which works under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs. There are three categories of entry and service in the Bangladesh Police: the officer cadre from ASP upwards (which requires passing a national civil services examination); the upper subordinate ranks of ASI – SI – Inspector; and below this the constabulary. There have been several attempts at police reform in Bangladesh by committees and commissions established in the 1970s and 1980s. They made various recommendations, none of which were adopted. More recently, following a needs assessment by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the early 2000s, a Police Reform Programme (PRP) was instituted in 2006 for an initial period of 2006-2009 and a second phase for 2009-2014. The objectives of the PRP, which is funded and supported primarily by the UNDP and the Department of International Development (DFID), are:

*“Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bangladesh Police by supporting key areas of access to justice; including crime prevention, investigations, police operations and prosecutions; human resource management and training; and future directions, strategic capacity and oversight”.*⁴⁵

Significantly, the PRP put in tremendous efforts to address gender equality in policing. It also engaged in support and capacity building for the police in crime prevention and investigation, and the development of strategic plans. There have been some achievements in the form of model *thanas* (local police stations) and the drafting of a Police Ordinance in 2007. The latter, in particular, was a comprehensive effort to replace the outdated 1861 Police Act. However, it has not been promulgated to date and the prospects for doing so appear to be growing more remote as time passes.

The Numbers and Representation of Women in Policing

1974 saw the first recruitment of women into the police force, but the numbers remained low for years. In 1986, the first woman joined the officer level, and then for the next decade from 1988 to 1998, not a single

⁴⁵ As stated on the Police Reforms Programme website: www.prp.org.bd.

woman was recruited at the officer level.⁴⁶ As described below, the number of women has increased sharply in recent years, due mostly to the focus on gender by the PRP and the inclusion of gender priorities by the police themselves in a former Strategic Plan. In fact, the Bangladesh Police has taken strides to not only ensure women's representation in the lower ranks, but also in mid-level and senior management positions. These improvements are to be commended and are evidence of what can be achieved when special effort is made. However, there is still a long journey to travel.

From 2007 to 2013, the percentage of women in the police in Bangladesh has more than doubled from 1.87% to 4.63%. At the end of 2013, out of a total working strength of 1,54,208 police, 6,853 were women.⁴⁷ Furthermore, there have been specific improvements in the representation of women at senior levels. In spite of these gains, the overall percentage of women police is still at less than 5 per cent.

Table 1: Number of Women Police

Rank	Number of Women
Addl. IGP	1
DIG	2
Addl. DIG	2
SP	12
Addl. SP	57
Sr. ASP	19
ASP	112
Inspector	54
Sub-Inspector	481
ASI	412
Constable	5,701
Total	6,853

In terms of sheer numbers, women are predominantly present in the ranks of the constabulary, as is common in other countries and contexts. However, interestingly and perhaps unusually, this is also the level with the lowest overall representation of women. In the cadre level (the ranks of ASP and above), there are 205 women of a total of 1,967 serving officers, thus constituting 10.4%; at the upper subordinate level there are 947 women out of 14,793 working police, representing 6.4 per cent. But at constabulary level there are 5,701 women out of a total of 127,171, making it 4.48 per cent. This goes against trends in other countries, where the representation of women decreases as the ranks are scaled. It should also be noted, however, that women are still severely under-represented in the most senior posts (for example, of 42 DIGs, only two are women).

⁴⁶ The first woman in a supervisory post (ASP), Ms Fatima Begum, was recruited through the sixth Bangladesh Civil Service Commission in 1986; another four women were subsequently appointed in the seventh examination in 1988.

⁴⁷ Statistics on the representation of women were made available by the Bangladesh Police in December 2013 and April 2014.

SECTION 2

Legal and Policy Framework

The 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh protects the rights and equality of women in society in Part II on Fundamental Principles of State Policy and Part 111 on Fundamental Rights through the following provisions:⁴⁸

Article 10: Steps to be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life.

Article 19: State to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens.

Article 28: Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste sex or place of birth and enables state to make special provision in favour of women.

Article 29: Guarantees equality of opportunity for all citizens and prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth in relation to public employment.

Bangladesh ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1984, although it maintains a reservation on Article 2.⁴⁹ There are also a number of national policies that are directed at or contain provisions on gender development and equality, such as the National Women's Development Policy, 2011⁵⁰ and Vision 2021.⁵¹

There is no shortage of laws and policies that on paper protect women's rights; the problem lies with their realisation in practice:

“Although existing national legislation does ensure far-reaching gender equality and protection against discrimination and violence, there is widespread ignorance of the law and significant resistance to implementation of gender equality in the courts, the law enforcement agencies and in society at large. Implementation of laws and policies guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for women has faced many barriers. Constitutional rights and commitments under international conventions have not always been transformed into laws and policies protecting women's equal rights.”⁵²

The legal and policy framework of policing is much in need of updating. There are actually 935 laws in Bangladesh that relate to policing in some form. The framework is highly irrational and full of contradictions and gaps.⁵³ The draft Policing Ordinance of 2007 would therefore have immense importance and benefit in updating and organising the legal and policy framework. It has the potential to “*make the police publicly accountable,*

48 Commonwealth Legal Information Institute, *Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*: <http://www.commonlii.org/bd/legis/const/2004/index.html>

49 CEDAW South Asia website, Ratification Status, <http://cedawsouthasia.org/regional-overview/ratification-status-in-south-asia>.

50 Bangladesh National Portal of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (2011), *National Women Development Policy 2011*, http://mowca.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mowca.portal.gov.bd/policies/64238d39_0eccd_4a56_b00c_b834cc54f88d/National-Women-Policy-2011English.pdf.

51 Board of Investment, Bangladesh Prime Minister's Office, *Bangladesh as we want to see in 2021*: <http://www.boi.gov.bd/index.php/about-bangladesh1/government-and-policies/government-vision-2021>.

52 Working Paper by Tahera Yasmin, Christine Brendel and Christine Mialkas, under guidance from GTZ Senior Advisor, Promita Sengupta, “*Gender-Responsive Community-based Policing in Bangladesh: A Pilot Initiative*”, German Development Cooperation, p. 9.

53 The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2010), *Feudal Forces: Reform Delayed, Moving from Force to Service in South Asian Policing*, p. 31, http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/police/feudal_forces_reform_delayed_2010.pdf.

operationally neutral, functionally specialised, democratically controlled and responsive to the needs of the community".⁵⁴ It also contained provisions to tackle political interference in policing, and would have established a National Police Commission to provide non-partisan oversight and a Public Police Complaints Commission. But it is silent on facilitative provisions on women police and neglects to enshrine a minimum proportion for the representation of women.

There have been efforts by the Bangladesh Police themselves to address gender equality and sensitisation within the force, most notably through its prioritisation in an earlier Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan for 2008-2010 identified "gender neutrality" as a core value and articulated women police and gender equality as a strategic direction to include the development of a gender policy, promotion of gender awareness training, implementation of specific procedures for treatment and interaction with women, children and other vulnerable groups, an increase in women's representation in the service, and a feasibility assessment and implementation of institutionalised support mechanisms for women such as the Bangladesh Police Women's Network (BPWN). An action plan then went on to identify specific objectives and activities for each of these.⁵⁵

A Trailblazer: The Bangladesh Police Women's Network (BPWN)

Launched in 2008 with the support of the PRP, the BPWN is arguably the most active, organised and extensive network of women police officers among the countries studied. Its vision is to develop leadership among women through skill and capacity enhancement in line with nationally and internationally adopted policies. Its central governing committee comprises 23 members from all ranks and posts. Apart from encouraging empowerment and participation, it organises national and international conferences for women police. Its goals are to:

- Strengthen the position of women police in Bangladesh.
- Develop a professional attitude and acquire world class knowledge by introducing them to the international network.
- Increase the number of women police and ensure women's participation in the national and international milieu.
- Ensure a woman-friendly working environment.
- Increase professional capacity by organising training and publications.
- Protect women's rights in recruitment, promotion and posting.
- Initiate effective measures to find opportunities of cooperation through interaction.
- Arrange for fruitful participations with other development partners, organisations and groups for the development of women at large.

The most recent and current Strategic Plan for 2012-14 does not prioritise gender in any way, and beyond a few references on the need for police to be gender sensitive in their work and a commitment to career planning generally (which might be of benefit to women police) there are no other references to addressing gender equality in the force.⁵⁶ Considering the important and positive gains made in increasing women's representation in the police, it would have been all the more important that this plan continued to highlight the issue and lay

54 International Crisis Group (2009), *Bangladesh: Getting Police Reform on Track*, 11 December, p. 4, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/182%20Bangladesh%20Getting%20Police%20Reform%20on%20Track.pdf>.

55 Bangladesh Police, *Strategic Plan Bangladesh Police (2008-2010)*, PART III, Action Plan: Goals/Objectives Strategy and Timeline, pp. 9-16: <http://www.prp.org.bd/downloads/strategic%20plan.pdf>.

56 Bangladesh Police, *Strategic Plan Bangladesh Police (2012-14)*: http://www.police.gov.bd/userfiles/file/Statigic_Plan_14-11-12_color_print.pdf.

down further policies. Given the scale of the problems, which require long-term and persistent efforts, this is disappointing.

Gender was a priority of the Police Reforms Programme (PRP) efforts, and in policy terms led to two specific initiatives: gender guidelines and a draft Gender Policy. The former were concerned with the external aspect of how the police (and particularly policemen) interact with women and children in the community, looking at issues such as use of language, body language and how to deal with women appropriately, and were disseminated to all police stations.⁵⁷

The details of the Gender Policy are under final review and as of May 2015, the BPWN is examining the draft. Once they review it, the gender policy will be sent to the authorities for final approval. However, on the basis of a conference presentation by officials involved in its development, the draft strategy appears to be a comprehensive one, which has as key objectives:

- To ensure equality among men and women police at all levels of the organisation.
- To ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women police officers and their equal participation in all activities.
- To undertake affirmative action, considering the history of discrimination against women as well as the specific needs of women.
- To create conducive and woman-friendly conditions and environment to improve the status of women in society.
- To mainstream gender and development.

The draft outlines priorities, policies and required actions in relation to recruitment, promotion, leave, transfer, posting, termination, suitable restrooms and accommodation, provision of day care, capacity-building and in-house training, gender sensitivity awareness, deployment in peace-keeping missions, deployment generally across police stations, and sexual harassment and zero tolerance, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and implementation.⁵⁸

57 Police Reforms Programme (2007), *Gender Guidelines for Model Police Stations*: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/GG.pdf> (available in Bangla only).

58 These are explored in more detail in the relevant sections later.

SECTION 3

Experiences and Challenges

Attitude of the Public

Several public attitude surveys conducted by the Police Reform Programme reveal high levels of support in the public for women in policing. In the first of these, in 2009 for example, 90% of households surveyed expressed support for women in the police service. Almost half (42%) felt that women should comprise half of the police service.⁵⁹ A further survey conducted in 2011 found that the vast majority of the public (93.6%) believed that women were under-represented in the police. In response to a question on the representation of men, 75.5% said that there were too many men in the police service!⁶⁰

Findings were a little more mixed when it came to confidence in the ability of women to do the job as effectively as men. For example, when asked what role women should play in the police, almost 78% of respondents said they could assist women or child victims, with only 24.9% indicating that they could be involved in crime management or criminal investigation.⁶¹

Separately, this research identified an interesting additional finding that the public respected female police officers more than male police officers, indicating a more positive experience on the ground. Comments included:

“The public respect us more than men. The image of the police is bad because of men”.

“The public respects us as we do not take bribes like men do”.

*“The public respects women police more than men”.*⁶²

This is an indication that women are seen as less tainted by the image of corruption, further affirming the importance of recruiting more women into the police service to improve the image of the police and public confidence in the service.

Recruitment Processes

Recruitment to the Bangladesh Police is conducted in four tiers/ranks: Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), Sub-Inspector, Sergeant and Constable.⁶³

1. The ASP is the highest position or rank for entry into the Bangladesh Police. Two-thirds of the ASPs are recruited directly and one-third through promotions of Inspectors. The direct recruitment of ASPs is conducted by the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC).

59 Police Reform Programme (2009), *Police Reforms Programme-Public Attitude-Follow-up Survey Final Report*, p. 53: <http://www.prp.org.bd/downloads/FollowupSurvey.pdf>.

60 Police Reforms Programme (2011), *Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh*, p. 20: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/Baseline%20Survey%20on%20Personal%20Security%20and%20Police%20Performance%20in%20Bangladesh%20-Summary%20Report.pdf>.

61 Police Reforms Programme (2011), *Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh*, p. 21: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/Baseline%20Survey%20on%20Personal%20Security%20and%20Police%20Performance%20in%20Bangladesh%20-Summary%20Report.pdf>.

62 It was also expressed that the public respects us as much as they do male police officers, but the public is afraid of us during the Focus Group Discussions with the Researchers in April 2014.

63 Bangladesh Police Website: http://www.police.gov.bd/career_child.php?id=247.

2. The Sub-Inspector is the non-cadre, mid-level entry position to the Bangladesh Police. Fifty per cent are recruited directly and the remaining posts are filled through promotion of Assistant Sub-Inspectors. The direct recruitment of Sub-Inspector is conducted by Police Headquarters.
3. The Sergeant is a mid-level entry position to the Bangladesh Police. All Sergeants are directly recruited by Police Headquarters. Until early 2014, only men could apply to be Sergeants. There was a positive policy change in 2014 which opened up this position to women too, and recruitment of women to the rank of Sergeant began in the same year.⁶⁴
4. The Constable is the primary level entry position to the Bangladesh Police and is directly recruited by the Superintendent of Police of the concerned district.

There is a 10 per cent quota for women for the civil service, including the Police Department. The initial years of the PRP showed what can be done through proactive efforts to bring women into policing. Physical criteria for recruitment are fitted to the reality – for example, there are different requirements for each entry level which allow for differing heights for men and women and no immediately obvious physical training barriers are presented. Energetic efforts were taken to create awareness and enthusiasm in the first phase by, for example, visiting colleges and universities to encourage women to apply. Workshops were conducted with senior police and human resources departments and posters and stickers were widely used. This led to a sharp increase in recruitment of women, over a relatively short time. However, under the second Strategic Plan, the emphasis on women in policing was reduced to sporadic mentions and recruitment slowed.

An examination of the processes indicates that on the face of it there are no significant problems. What is clearly needed however are specific efforts to encourage women to apply. Additionally, while advertisements in newspapers and websites do encourage women to apply, remote areas could be better targeted by the BPWN provided they are receive funds. Given the overall responsibility of the police establishment for this, they should proactively advertise vacancies at the national and district levels through mediums such as TV, print, and radio.

It is concerning that increasing the recruitment of women into the police was dropped from the current Strategic Plan. This may be owing to the focus and efforts in the last plan and perhaps time is needed to deal with the influx of women that entered the force. However, it sends a negative signal regarding the level of priority attached to women's recruitment and impacts on actual efforts expended when it is seemingly de-prioritised. While numbers can be adjusted on the basis of needs and targets can be set according to specific shortfalls in particular ranks, when representation is so low, a focus on recruitment cannot be adopted sporadically. It needs a consistent focus and commitment at the strategic and operational levels for a significant period of time to redress the imbalance.

There are numerous recommendations and positive action measures in the draft Gender Policy, which, if implemented, would have a significant impact. These include:

- A target to increase the representation of women from 4% to 8% by 2020.
- Ensuring the recruitment of at least 10% of police cadre women officers and 15% of non-cadre women personnel.
- Priority given to women candidates with equal educational qualifications and experience in the recruitment of Sub-Inspectors.
- Advocacy in print and electronic media and with the government to build support.
- Wide dissemination of announcements of vacancies, to attract a diverse pool of applicants.
- A programme targeted at recruiting women from marginalised groups, including ethnic communities.

⁶⁴ On recruitment to Sergeant specifically, please see: <http://www.police.gov.bd/sergeant.php>.

- The presence of at least one woman police officer on the interview board/recruitment process of Constables to Sub-Inspectors.
- Awareness programmes in colleges, universities and in the community to motivate women to join the police.
- At least 10% of senior women police officers to be incorporated into the senior management team.
- A gender sensitive criterion to guide recruitment. Promotion, training and other job enrichments for the police to ensure women's equal representation through the ranks and their participation at all levels of decision-making positions.
- More women to be posted and involved in investigations processes.

If implemented, these measures would certainly go a long way to ensure that recruitment of women into the Bangladesh Police is consistently targeted in a way that will help address the serious current under-representation. Without such a focus, there is a real risk that the positive progress made to date will be undermined.

Male Culture within the Police Service

Considering that for several years, women's representation in the Bangladesh Police stood below 2% - and the fact that no women were recruited for a ten-year period from 1988 to 1998, it is hardly surprising that a male culture exists in the service. This is evident from the experiences of the women police officers who participated in this research as well as in external research which examined attitudes of male police officers towards their female colleagues.

Surveys carried out among police officers by the PRP contained some worrying findings regarding attitudes towards women police officers and their effectiveness. In the 2011 survey, 55% of male police officers said that women police officers were not as effective as their male counterparts in preventing crime, and almost 40% felt they were not as effective at investigating crime. While many expressed the view that this was because women officers needed more training, subsequent questioning revealed a more deep-seated prejudice against women. For example, 56.1% of male officers disagreed that women police officers made the police service stronger.⁶⁵

Such attitudes indicating that women are not needed and do not make any worthwhile contribution to policing are bound to have a negative impact on the experiences of women police officers. What emerged in particular was a difference between the attitudes of the senior and junior men towards women police officers of ASI/Sub-Inspector and Inspector level or above (thus carrying rank). Comments included:

"Subordinates do not respect us. Male constables do not respect us".

"Junior male subordinates follow our instructions hesitatingly. They obey men's orders more willingly and do their work efficiently. They find it difficult to address us as "Sir", they address us as "Apa" [meaning sister]".⁶⁶

"Women are given more respect by the seniors".

"Junior male staff find it difficult to address us as "Sir".

"Juniors give us less importance".

65 Police Reforms Programme (2011), *Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh*, p. 21: <http://prp.org.bd/downloads/Baseline%20Survey%20on%20Personal%20Security%20and%20Police%20Performance%20in%20Bangladesh%20-Summary%20Report.pdf>.

66 In the Bangladesh Police personnel from Assistant Sub-Inspector to the highest rank – of both genders – are addressed as Sir.

“Seniors respect us but the problem is with the juniors”.

These are signs that women’s authority is not recognised. This means that senior women officers find it difficult to command basic respect from subordinates, which is deeply problematic and undermining in a hierarchical structure. These views and experiences were confirmed by a participant who had engaged in a gender sensitisation training with the police:

“Attitudes are not very positive... Not all officers but most thought, “Why do we need women police officers”? And if they did accept them it was only for desk work and not for field work. IGPs and Additional IGPs were more positive. Senior officers go abroad for different seminars and their horizons are broadened by getting more information about women in the police, etc. With junior officers, the first response was, “Why do we need women police officers?” They see women as the weaker sex and vulnerable, and thus incapable of supporting or protecting others. Senior officers realise they need us because half the population is women and you have to provide them with service. So the problem is attitude”.

Among the more senior women officers, views were mixed. Many interviewees identified problems, for example a woman was denied a post and when she asked why, she was specifically told it was because she was a woman and the interviewer didn’t think she was capable of handling the position. Other comments included:

“Yes there is a male culture in the police force”.

“It is a male-dominated force”.

“A male culture is present and it is dominant. Yes it is prevalent”.

On the other hand, some of the interviewees felt that if there were problems, it was up to the woman to prove herself, as opportunities were available. This could be because they faced less exposure to male attitudes and did not suffer the experiences of their female colleagues in the junior ranks. However, it is important that they communicate with female colleagues via the BPWN and other forums to show solidarity and leadership. Several comments were made on the importance of leadership and an emphasis that things were changing or improving by senior women who had already carved their way up.

Others were more circumspect about the challenge:

“Men are present in large in number. In policymaking, 99 per cent are men. If we can go higher we could change the trend. We cannot say they are not sympathetic. We must accept that women’s participation in the police is less and men have been in the force for a long time”.

Overall, a deep-rooted male culture and challenging attitudes towards women police officers appear to be the norm. If this is left unaddressed, it will hamper other efforts to improve the experience of women police officers. While improvements may be made to policies and practices on paper, they will be rendered meaningless if attitudes and culture do not change. There is some evidence that this may already be happening, as cited by one participant in this research:

“Everything is the same theoretically but the reality is very different”.

Harassment at the Workplace

As might be expected, findings concerning the existence or extent of sexual harassment were mixed. This is not a surprising phenomenon given the common reluctance of many women to speak out.

Bangladesh does not have legislation prohibiting sexual harassment, but there are certainly robust standards in place. The National Women's Development Policy in Bangladesh contains provisions for zero tolerance on harassment at the national level. The High Court has passed an Order which defines sexual harassment, makes it a punishable offence, and directs all employers to evolve "an appropriate and effective mechanism" for redress of complaints.⁶⁷ Each employer is to establish a Complaint Committee to receive and inquire into complaints, with a minimum of five members of which the majority are to be women, with at least two from an external body preferably with gender justice expertise. The High Court has directed employers and managements of all workplaces to give importance to publicity on sexual harassment by preparing and publishing booklets containing its guidelines.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

The High Court defines sexual harassment as (verbatim):

- a. Unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (directly or by implication) as physical contact or advances;
- b. Attempts or efforts to establish physical relation having sexual implication by abuse of administrative, authoritative or professional powers;
- c. Sexually coloured verbal representation;
- d. Demand or request for sexual favours;
- e. Showing pornography;
- f. Sexually coloured remark or gesture;
- g. Indecent gesture, teasing through abusive language, stalking, jokes having sexual implication;
- h. Insult through letters, telephone calls, cell phone calls, SMS, pottering, notice, cartoon, writing on bench, chair, table, notice boards, walls of offices, factory, classroom, washroom having sexual implication;
- i. Taking still or video photographs for the purpose of blackmailing and character assassination;
- j. Preventing participation in sports, cultural, organisational and academic activities on the grounds of sex and /or for the purpose of sexual harassment;
- k. Making love proposal and exerting pressure or posing threats in case of refusal to love proposal;
- l. Attempt to establish sexual relation by intimidation, deception or false assurance.

In theory and on paper, the Bangladesh Police has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. The police's disciplinary rules state if an incident occurs, the respondent faces departmental proceedings. If the allegations are proven, the individual has to step down and could potentially be prosecuted depending on the severity of the case.

⁶⁷ *Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association v Bangladesh and others* 14 BLC (2009) 694

Providing Support to Women Police: BPWN Helpline

In 2013, the BPWN took the initiative to establish a helpline for women police officers of all ranks for any problems they encounter in the workplace, including sexual harassment, in order to establish a woman-friendly working environment. The BPWN has the responsibility to respond rapidly and provide a service to callers. They do not replace formal inquiries on harassment, but can provide advice and support to victims of harassment. They can also, for example, formally advise and inform the chief of a unit about the matter for departmental action. The helpline is resourced by the BPWN itself. This is a good example of a tangible mechanism created by a women's network to assist and support women police officers.

Our research indicated fairly high levels of awareness of the procedures that exist to complain, and of the helpline run by the BPWN. There was however little if any awareness of the High Court Order or the Complaint Committee that must be constituted in every police department.

In surveys carried out among 243 women police officers from the rank of Constable to Inspector, only 19 (7.8%) said they had faced sexual harassment. Within the focus groups and interviews however, views ranged from denial of the existence of harassment to a claim that it was “widespread”. Among those who acknowledged that it was a problem, incidents cited included:

“Male police spread rumours. Some officers in charge of a police station also do it”.

“They send SMSs on mobiles”.

“When we are sent on a posting we are given a bad name even before we reach the place. If I complain I cannot stay in the department”.

They were also clear on the lack of reporting and the reasons for that:

“Complaining to a senior is not effective because we would be victimised. Complaining means adding more pressure on ourselves. In fact, if we complain, we are given more duty as a punishment”.

“Harassment happens but girls do not say anything, thinking they will be considered bad”.

The view among the junior ranks was that the problem was more common at their level than in the senior ranks:

“Sexual harassment is less in the cadres. Senior cadres are respected...only cadre level officers command respect”.

It was also the view among senior officers that harassment was experienced more at the junior level:

“A Constable may face it but not at the cadre level”.

“The problem may exist at the Constable level especially for those working in the field”.

While the overwhelming majority of senior women officers interviewed were of the view that harassment did not occur at their level, one senior female officer admitted that harassment at the cadre rank did exist, but women are hesitant to complain against their more powerful seniors.

Several other interviewees also expressed the feeling that harassment is occurring, but is just not mentioned:

“It is like a taboo to be addressed strongly”.

It appears that sexual harassment exists more at the subordinate level. If it does exist in the other ranks, most women do not wish to discuss it for fear of being labelled or further victimised.

The draft Gender Policy did spell out more detailed provisions to address the problem, including:

- There will be a sexual harassment policy to ensure that women police are not physically, mentally or sexually harassed at the workplace.
- The Bangladesh Police will form guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour, define what constitutes sexual harassment and set out the disciplinary measures if someone commits a crime.
- A complaint box must be put up at every police station, police department and unit according to the High Court directive. Women police and women service receivers may use this to lodge complaints if they are uncomfortable about sharing information on harassment publicly.
- Superintendents of Police/Deputy Commissioners/Heads of other police institutions of the respective districts/units must check this box every month and take appropriate action.
- There should be a divisional committee that can investigate allegations of sexual harassment at the workplace.
- The Bangladesh Police will distribute and discuss the sexual harassment guidelines with all police officers.

However, fear of repercussion or a belief that complaining will not do any good seem to be the underlying issues that need to be addressed, particularly by more stringent measures to prevent victimisation.

Appropriate Facilities and Policies

The key to enable women to participate equally in the workforce is to put in place the necessary policies and facilities to ensure that they can work in a dignified manner and balance professional and personal responsibilities. Owing to the lack of these facilities women are reluctant to join the police. The existing working conditions of policewomen are challenging and largely unacceptable.

Women police officers identified several recurring infrastructural issues relating to a lack of separate toilets, restrooms and changing facilities for women, which are basic, essential facilities. Other problems concerned the lack of accommodation or barracks for women that are necessary to enable them to take up certain postings. While there are undoubtedly resource challenges in terms of the costs involved in addressing these gaps, participants shared that these were not the only aspect of the problem:

“What the government has to do is increase the budget to have more logistic support and facilities. Sometimes the budget comes so late that it is sent back because the financial year has ended”.

The length of shifts – often a minimum of 12 hours – was singled out on numerous occasions. Apart from the physical impact of long hours of work under the given working conditions, for women with family responsibilities, such long absences from home present particular challenges. Comments included:

“Long working hours and the difficulty in balancing work and home serve as factors that discourage women from applying for this job”.

Lack of transport to and from duty stations was commonly identified as an issue, which has both safety and cost implications for women. This, along with several other problems, were seen as being worse for women in the junior ranks/Constables.

In Bangladesh, maternity leave for all female government servants (including women police) is six months (extended from four months in 2011). During focus group discussions with Constables, and SI/ASI and Inspector ranks, many of the women police expressed the need for one year maternity leave. Only one day care centre was identified in the course of the research; all other areas identified the lack of a day care centre as a problem. For example, one woman stated:

"I have worked in the office with my six-month-old baby sitting on the desk".

The lack of appropriate facilities has a knock-on effect on the posting and deployment of women, as described by a considerable number of women:

"Women are assigned postings in thanas (police stations) without any planning and irrespective of whether accommodation is available".

"The problem is with logistics. If I do not have support, how can I work"?

"When imposing night duty, the necessary support for a woman police's safety is not totally provided and neither is it possible in most cases. So women are not given those duties".

The need to ensure that proper policies and facilities are in place to enhance the experience of women police officers is reinforced in the findings of the 2011 PRP survey report:

"The extent to which an organisation values its employees is reflected in the policies and practices it adopts, which, if implemented, would utilise and reward their skills and commitment, build confidence and encourage development...It would also be reflected in the working conditions provided. In all of these aspects, more could be done for female officers by the police service. Even the majority of male police officers (65.3 %) said that there were not adequate thana-level station facilities for female officers. 58.9% of female officers agreed".⁶⁸

Several recommendations in the draft Gender Policy could tackle the problems to some extent:

- A female police officer will be entitled to six months' maternity leave with full pay during childbirth and, if necessary, medical leave, annual leave and leave without pay may be added to this leave.
- There will be separate toilets for female police in all the police stations/ranges/units, police schools and all the offices of Bangladesh Police.
- There will be appropriate accommodation for female police in all the police stations.
- There will be day care centres or child corners in all the women's barracks, training centres, units and departments of the Bangladesh Police.
- The day care will be run by Bangladesh Police. The police (parent) will have to pay a minimum cost for the services of his/her children.
- The day care centre will provide pre-schooling services to the children of the police.
- There will be a corner for breast feeding in all police stations.

68 Police Reforms Programme (2011), *Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh*, p. 20.

Adequate resources need to be provided to ensure that the facilities are available in practice, and that the resources allocated are actually spent. With the recent rise in the number of women in the Bangladesh Police, the demand for these facilities and policies will be increasingly apparent. The lack of these facilities could make it very difficult for women police to sustain, as conditions become more challenging. This would counter the good work already done in addressing representation issues.

Deployment and Allocation of Duties

In the focus group discussions that were held among Constables, the sense that emerged was that they were assigned a mixture of desk and operational duties. When asked which they preferred, answers varied.

At the next higher level, a more problematic picture emerged in terms of women not being given serious cases. Clearly, serious cases need to be investigated by those who are best equipped and most knowledgeable to do so, and it is important not to take a simple, gendered perspective on that. It is equally important, however, to conduct a gendered analysis of whether there are blocks or biases in the system in relation to training, promotion or deployment based on stereotypes, which have the effect of denying opportunities to deserving woman officers. In the present context, there was evidence of all of these. Comments included:

“Women are not given serious cases. Only women-related cases are given to them to handle”.

“Only two women officers have investigated murders and that too for a petty crime...most women police handle cases related to women and children”.

Among the most senior officers, evidence of problems also emerged:

“There is discrimination when it comes to sending a woman to head a district. In this case there is 100 per cent discrimination...I will never be sent to a district. The seniors do not even ask whether I want to go to a district. There is only one woman heading a district in the whole of Bangladesh and that place is a peaceful place. There are so many eligible women SPs. Why have we not been posted in a district”?

“Women should be present in all departments”.

“Women should be allowed to work everywhere based on skills and purpose. Women should not be limited to specific areas. Women are capable of working at all levels and that is how it should be. However, there is always an expectation that women must prove themselves and their capability in the job and this general mindset needs to be changed”.

“Women officers should not be cornered into specific areas but should rather be allowed to build their capabilities at all levels and in all fields”.

“Our senior male officers are ‘one-eyed’ and they give their blue-eyed boys all the postings”.

These problems were also identified in several other external reports. For example:

“For women already in the force, headquarters has not shown much interest in improving their working conditions or using their unique skills to prevent violent crimes against women. Instead, female police today are confined mostly to administrative positions. Their only gender-based role is detaining women in their lock-ups and assisting their male counterparts in maintaining order when

*required. Although the PRP is attempting to improve conditions for female officers, there are still too few policewomen involved in community policing”.*⁶⁹

Positively, there is public support for no differential in deployment of men and women police. The PRP’s public attitudes survey of 2009 found support for women to be deployed in the same roles as men: 38% of the public felt that women police officers should be given the same assignments as their male counterparts.⁷⁰

The draft Gender Policy recognises that on paper the service rules are the same for men and women police officers in relation to postings and transfers, but it recommends that some positive exceptions should be made:

- At the time of posting and transfer of a woman police officer, the work station and place of residence of the husband/parent will be considered. Similarly, in the case of a man, the work station of the wife will be taken into consideration.
- During the period of maternity, i.e. from the first month till six months after childbirth, a woman will not be transferred from her workplace.

While these measures are positive steps, it is respectfully suggested that the problems run much deeper than this and more concrete positive actions are required to ensure that women are deployed and allocated duties in a non-discriminatory manner. The common instinct across the region to corner women police exclusively for crimes against women and children, and absolutely neglect to enable them to gain wider and more varied policing experience, seems to be prevalent in Bangladesh. Also, the impact of the “boy’s club” when it comes to postings (and other matters) hugely disadvantages women across contexts, no less here.

There was also evidence of a slightly problematic attitude among more senior women police officers. They are unwilling to accept that the responsibility of acknowledging the barriers that exist in practice, which prevent women from taking the opportunities that are presented, particularly in the lower ranks, lies with the women themselves. One particularly disturbing recommendation was that women should “*just keep on working with eyes and ears shut*”. A number of participants articulated that the problems lay with the women themselves. It is incumbent on women to support other women by being honest about the barriers and challenges that exist.

Training and Support

Training in the Bangladesh Police depends on the entry level.⁷¹ Rather than problems with training per se, what was articulated by many people was the need to specifically target and redesign training to build capacity and confidence among women. One suggested that:

69 International Crisis Group (2009), *Bangladesh: Getting Police Reform on Track*, p. 26: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/182%20Bangladesh%20Getting%20Police%20Reform%20on%20Track.pdf>.

70 Police Reforms Programme (2009), *Police Reforms Programme-Public Attitude-Follow-up Survey, FINAL Report*, p. 53: <http://www.prp.org.bd/downloads/FollowupSurvey.pdf>.

71 All of the following information has been taken from the Bangladesh Police website.

Cadre Services: On joining the service, officers undergo a one-year basic training course at the Bangladesh Police Academy as ASP Probationers. They attend knowledge and skill learning courses on law, physical training, driving, computer and equestrian skills, and musketry. They then undergo six months of practical training in a district as a Probationer. Subsequently, they attend the Foundation Training at the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC). Throughout their professional lives, they are subject to skills development trainings.

Sub Inspector: Recruitment is followed by a one-year training course at the Bangladesh Police Academy as Outside Cadets. Thereafter, the recruits are put through another year of practical training with different police units. Sub-Inspectors also undergo different in-service training courses at home and abroad.

Sergeant: Once recruited, Sergeants undergo a six-month training programme at the Bangladesh Police Academy as Probationary Sergeants. They are then put through six months of orientation training at their place of posting as probationers. Sergeants also undergo different internal and external training courses at home and abroad.

Constable: After recruitment, Constables undergo six months of basic training at different centres, including the Bangladesh Police Academy as Trainee Recruit Constable (TRC). While working in different units, Constables also undergo different in-service training courses for skills development and professional growth.

“Shyness/confidence needs to be addressed at training – currently the training is the same but actually needs to address differences”.

A few other issues were referenced:

“In relation to in-career training, there is no discrimination, but women are reluctant to go to places far from their posting places”.

“For foreign training, it has to be in a group – stigma and social factors prohibit a woman from going on her own”.

Beyond this, no significant problems were highlighted. However, other research, such as the PRP survey of police officers in 2011, identified the need for training. Many male police officers saw their female colleagues as less effective at investigating crimes, and most felt this was because they needed more training. The survey further found that fewer women received training in crime management and criminal investigation than their male counterparts, about 4.3 per cent of women officers said they had received such training compared to 15.5 per cent of men.⁷² It is a serious gap if women police are receiving less training opportunities in core areas such as these. This dates from 2011; it is hoped this has been corrected.

The draft Gender Policy also makes specific recommendations on training:

- Every year an annual training plan will be made by the training division of the Bangladesh Police to ensure that women police receive equal opportunities to attend training courses.
- While attending training, women police will be permitted to bring their babies (up to two years) to the training centre. She may also bring an attendant with her but expenses on account of that will have to be borne by the Bangladesh Police.

The International Crisis Group report further notes:

*Few training facilities are suitable for women. One solution to the problem, one IGP suggests, is a one-year moratorium on all male recruitment to allow training facilities to accommodate women. Provided recruits can be found, a moratorium could work to rapidly increase the number of female police. Moreover, police headquarters should give priority to female officers when filling current vacancies provided they meet the requirements of the position. If no female officers can be found to fill current vacancies, headquarters should consider providing additional training for women”.*⁷³

Retention and Promotion

On retention, the main view was that dropouts were rare, and when they do occur it is for reasons unrelated to the job. For example:

“It usually happens due to women facing problems at home”.

Problems from home could emerge, for example, from the demands and pressures faced by the women owing to lack of facilities and policies such as fixed hours of work, flexible shifts or postings that make the home difficult to manage in parallel to work. In general, the sense that emerged was that being in the police was a “good” or “steady” job and thus it may well be that there is a reluctance to leave. However, retention does not appear to

⁷² Police Reforms Programme (2011), *Baseline Survey on Personal Security and Police Performance in Bangladesh*, p. 21

⁷³ International Crisis Group (2009) *Bangladesh: Getting Police Reform on Track*, p. 26, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/asia/south-asia/bangladesh/182%20Bangladesh%20Getting%20Police%20Reform%20on%20Track.pdf>.

be actively monitored and systems should be put in place to do so, in order to ascertain if or where problems might lie.

Promotions are ostensibly based on an objective, merit-based system. Record of experience, performance on promotion tests, and completion of required training courses are some key criteria. Various sets of rules and regulations apply to the promotion processes of different ranks. Problems were identified as running across the police organisation, generally in terms of lack of transparency. Figures have undoubtedly improved in the senior positions with the active focus on recruitment into these posts under the auspices of the PRP and the Strategic Plan. However, women must also be able to progress up the organisation and here the experience is mixed.

According to the statistics provided for this research there is a lack of women in the most senior ranks in the Bangladesh Police. The extent of the problem in the top five ranks is revealed, particularly when compared to the total numbers. Below these ranks, as noted earlier, representation is actually better than in some other parts of the world.

Table 2: Women in Senior Ranks

Designation	Total women working	Total working	Women as a percentage of the total
1 IGP	0	1	0%
2 Additional IGP, Grade 2	1	11	9%
3 DIG, Grade 3	2	42	4.7%
4 Additional DIG, Grade 4	2	70	2.8%
5 Police Superintendent, Grade 5	12	247	4.8%
6 Additional Police Superintendent, Grade 6	57	467	12.2%
7 Senior Assistant Police Superintendent, Grade 7	19	258	7%
8 Assistant Police Superintendent, Grade 9	112	871	12.8%

During the research, several participants referred to the ten-year gap when no women were recruited, and this unquestionably had an impact. In the more senior ranks, the women police officers did not highlight problems with promotions. Clearly however, there are difficulties in practice since women still dominate in the two lowest ranks (albeit that the recent increase in women recruits may contribute to this). As there do not seem to be serious systemic concerns relating to the processes around promotions, efforts and energies can be focused on short-term action to propel women upward through promotions.

What is also less clear is the extent to which women progress from the lower ranks to the middle and higher levels. In the focus group discussions with Constables and ASI/Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors, there was a reasonably high level of awareness of the levels they could apply for and the processes that existed to enable them to do so, but again there was little sense that this was happening in reality.

The draft Gender Policy does address the issue of promotion by recommending that regular and timely promotion of women police officers at all levels be ensured. No further actions are suggested however. As the numbers of women increase, it will become more important that there are opportunities for them to progress. Hence, the promotion process could benefit from a more rigorous and proactive approach.

SECTION 4

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is clear from this and other external research that while there has been considerable progress in recent years, there remain deep-seated problems in relation to women in policing in Bangladesh. It does however need to be acknowledged that policing as a whole in the country is in need of urgent and comprehensive reform. With the levels of problems that exist in policing overall, arguably efforts to address the gender aspect are somewhat akin to putting a sticking plaster on a broken limb. Nonetheless, there are specific efforts that can and should be made and indeed some of these changes would serve to improve overall policing and public confidence in it.

The important role played by the BPWN also needs to be acknowledged. Many participants in this research and in the surveys conducted referred to the BPWN. There is a high level of awareness about it among women police and it is clearly valued. However, there are some notes of caution that need to be sounded:

- Care needs to be taken that women police and issues faced by women in the police organisation are not relegated to the Network. Recognition of and responsibility for these must be mainstreamed through the organisation, i.e. organisational responsibility and support for women police officers is essential. For example, while the helpline established is an extremely important source of support for police officers, it cannot become a substitute for organisational mechanisms and responses. In addition to all that they are doing, the BPWN should advocate that proper institutional systems are in place.
- Likewise, in relation to implementation of reforms, the Network needs to be careful that it is not given or takes on responsibilities that properly lie with the police service itself. This becomes even more important when considered in light of the Network's resources, which are meagre and self-raised. If not done already, the Bangladesh Police Service could allocate some resources to the Network to support the important work that it is doing.

Based on the findings of this research, one area where the BPWN could direct its attention is in exploring and addressing the evident differences in attitudes and experiences among women police officers across the various ranks in the organisation and building some much-needed solidarity between women. In particular, this research detected a lack of knowledge or acknowledgement among the cadre officers about the barriers and challenges faced by other women in the organisation. There was a clear view at the senior levels that there were no problems, the opportunities for women were equal, there were no barriers and it was up to women to prove themselves and take the opportunities presented. This is clearly at odds with the views and experiences of other participants in the research and the findings more generally. It may well be that problems do not actually exist – or at least are not as significant – at the more senior ranks, although that seems unlikely. But even if that is the case, it is not true elsewhere and women in senior positions have an important role to play in leading and empowering other women in the organisation. This leadership begins with recognising the conditions that prevail.

As with other women police officers in the region, Bangladesh women have made a major contribution to international policing work, and it is evidently promoted and encouraged. This is of course a great opportunity for women to gain experience that they might not get in their own country. Thus, while such experiences should continue to be encouraged, so too should efforts be directed to ensure that women get similar experiences and opportunities within their own police service.

In the absence of the overall much-needed reform of the police service, of which gender reform should be a central aspect, there are still important steps that need to be taken to improve the situation for women. One such concrete step is to address gender as a core objective in any new Strategic Plan that is adopted. Its removal

from the most recent plan and the lack of any evident action plan can be reflected in the stasis around gender that currently seems to exist.

Apart from re-prioritising gender in the overall organisational Strategic Plan, the Bangladesh Police needs to adopt and implement a comprehensive and strong gender policy. The current draft Gender Policy goes some way towards addressing the problems that prevail but there are clearly underlying issues that need to be more effectively identified and targeted. It is important that such steps are taken if the great progress that has clearly been made in recent years is not to be undermined.

Recommendations

For the Government

1. Initiate a comprehensive programme of police reform:
 - Beginning with new policing legislation akin to the Police Ordinance of 2007
 - Engage fully and meaningfully with the PRP
 - Ensure that any necessary reforms are adequately resourced and implementation is monitored.
2. Introduce a law that prohibits sexual harassment:
 - That adopts a zero tolerance approach with suitable punishment
 - That ensures appropriate mechanisms for implementation, including appropriate gender balance
 - Imposes sanctions for non-compliance
 - Includes provisions prohibiting victimisation of complainants.
3. Provide adequate resources to the Bangladesh Police to enable it to provide required infrastructure to include:
 - Women's toilets in police stations
 - Women's restrooms or changing facilities
 - Adequate accommodation for women (and indeed other) officers and their families for postings
 - Transport for women officers
 - Day care facilities
 - Ensure resources allocated to police are spent as mandated
 - Provide for insurance for all members of the police department.
4. Earmark funds for BPWN.

For the Bangladesh Police

1. Reinstate gender as a core strategic objective, with associated actions, in the next Strategic Plan.
2. Adopt a strong and robust gender policy:
 - With accompanying action plans and targets that are resourced
 - With mechanisms for monitoring implementation
 - That has senior level involvement and responsibility.
3. Continue to increase representation of women:

- Consider the introduction of quotas or targets
 - Take active measures to ensure these are filled, such as outreach in terms of advertising and raising awareness
 - Target in particular more remote areas and harder-to-reach groups; not just schools and universities
 - Introduce programmes for women that provide support for the process of applying for the police force
 - Include women in the recruitment process itself
 - District SP's offices to coordinate with BPWN for intake of women constables
4. Engage in efforts to address the culture within the organisation to ensure it is more welcoming of women and their role:
 - Increased gender training and sensitisation
 - Inclusion of women (perhaps through setting quotas) in policy and decision-making bodies and processes
 - Make insubordination of senior female officers a disciplinary matter
 - Address postings and promotions for women.
 5. Comply fully with the High Court's Order on sexual harassment.
 6. Embark on a comprehensive infrastructural programme (resourced by government, with resources actually spent), to ensure that every police station or district has:
 - Separate toilets for women
 - Separate changing or restrooms
 - Transport
 - Accommodation
 - Day care facilities.
 7. Review current policy on working hours to introduce fixed working hours and shifts.
 8. Conduct an audit of the current roles and duties fulfilled by women and adopt an action plan to address identified blocks and gaps, particularly in relation to:
 - Field postings, including heading districts
 - Investigation roles
 - Serious cases beyond those involving women and children.
 9. Linked to this, carry out an audit and adopt measures to ensure women have adequate in-service training:
 - To fulfil the range of duties within the police force
 - That incorporates a focus on capacity-building and confidence that may currently be lacking in women
 - That includes the necessary facilities and policies that enable them to engage in training (such as child care, accommodation etc.).
 10. Introduce a system for monitoring retention of women officers:
 - That gathers detailed statistics including numbers, rank, length of service
 - That captures reasons for leaving, possibly by means of exit interview with an independent panel (or at least not the immediate superiors).

11. Introduce a transparent, objective, merit-based promotion system that:
 - Includes women in the promotion processes (such as development of criteria, assessment panels, etc.
 - Considers the inclusion of temporary positive action measures for promotion opportunities for the increased numbers of women, focusing in particular on upward movement from the lowest ranks.
12. Earmark and provide funds for BPWN.

For PRP

1. Ensure the focus on gender is sustained in the next phase of the reform programme (if there is to be one).
2. Work with the police to ensure that a gender policy is adopted that:
 - Is strong and robust
 - Has sign-off and support at the most senior level
 - Is resourced
 - Has actions plans including timetables, targets and monitoring and oversight mechanisms.
3. Continue to support the efforts of the Bangladesh Police Women's Network, including financially.

For BPWN

1. Continue building awareness of the helpline and encourage female officers to use it to report harassment and other concerns.
2. Build awareness of support and advice that can be offered by BPWN to victims of harassment in taking complaints through the official mechanisms.
3. Monitor data received from the helpline to identify trends or systemic problems.
4. Work with senior women officers to build knowledge and solidarity on the obstacles and challenges faced by women police across the ranks in the organisation.
5. Expand and strengthen the network.
6. Assist the Police Department at Headquarters and the District levels to ensure regular recruitment of women police at Constable, ASI, Sergeant and SI ranks.
7. Review the strength of women across the ranks at headquarters/units/battalions/districts and police stations.
8. Create a database of women police personnel from across all ranks, district and unit wise.
9. Facilitate women police to serve in the UN Female Formed Police Unit.
10. Take the initiative to train women police in computers, language and driving to enhance their capacity building and professionalism.

INDIA



SECTION 1

Overview of Police Organisation

Background and Context

Very little has changed in the structure and ethos of Indian policing since 1861, the year in which the Police Act was passed. The 1861 Act remains the statute in place and the basis for police laws⁷⁴ that govern policing in Indian states, despite an intervening 68 years of independence, and a progressive Constitution with human rights, democracy, and rule of law at its heart. While democracy is fully embedded, there has been no systemic fundamental reform of the police in independent India. Women had little place in colonial policing. At a current national average of 6%, they are only very slowly finding some subordinated space in the establishment.

Basic Structure of the Police

Each of India's 29 states has its own police force, for which recruitment is largely done by the state government. At the Central level, there is the Indian Police Service (IPS), an all-India service recruited, trained and managed by the central government. IPS officers fill the management and supervisory ranks of state police forces. Policing in the 7 Union Territories, including Delhi, is administered by the central government. Structurally, the police force in a state is mainly organised into two wings – the Civil Police and the Armed Police. The central government also maintains several Central Police Armed Forces who each have specific mandates and can be deployed to assist state governments when needed.⁷⁵

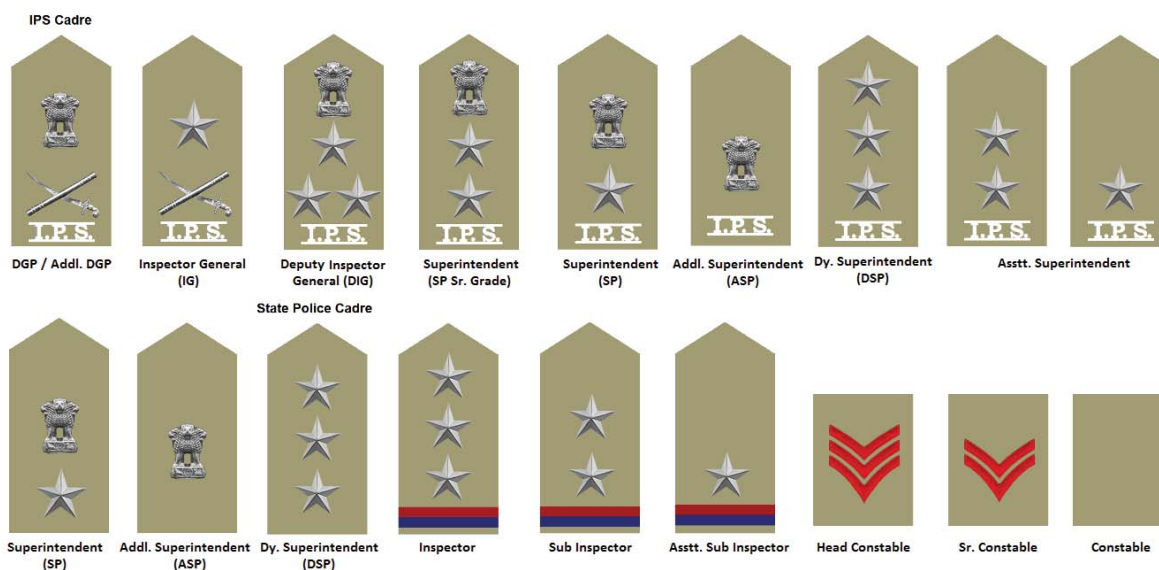
The head of the police in each state is the Director General of Police (DGP), who is responsible to the state government for the administration of the force and for advising the government on policing matters. The hierarchical structure of the police in India follows a vertical alignment consisting of IPS officers who have charge and supervision over specific jurisdictions, the “upper subordinates” (inspectors, sub-inspectors, and asst. sub-inspectors) who work generally at the police station level and do much of the crime investigation work, and the police constabulary to which is delegated the patrolling, surveillance, guard duties, and law and order work. The constabulary accounts for almost 88% of total police strength.

⁷⁴ As per the Constitution of India, only state legislatures can draft and pass Police Acts for their states. If a state does not enact a Police Act, then the central Police Act of 1861 automatically applies. In the decades post independence, Police Acts were passed in Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra (Bombay Police Act 1951) and Delhi, all modelled on the 1861 Act. Following a 2006 Supreme Court judgement which gave elaborate directions on police reform, states have passed new Police Acts at different points since 2007. As of July 2015, 17 states have their own Police Acts. None follow modern progressive legislative models and standards.

⁷⁵ This report deals only with state police forces, not central armed police forces.

The rank structure looks as follows:

- Director General of Police (DGP)
- Additional Director General of Police (Addl.DGP)
- Inspector General of Police (IGP)
- Deputy Inspector General of Police (Dy. IGP)
- Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP)
- Superintendent of Police (SP)
- Additional Superintendent of Police (Addl. SP)
- Assistant/Deputy Superintendent of Police (ASP/Dy SP)
- Inspector of Police
- Sub-Inspector of Police (SI)
- Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police (ASI)
- Police Head Constable
- Police Constable



The need for institutional reform of policing in India has long been recognised, and indeed there have been various commissions and committees established to inquire into and report on the topic.⁷⁶ Starting with the National Police Commission in 1979, through to a 2006 Supreme Court judgment in the Prakash Singh case, the problems – and indeed ways of addressing are them – are well-known.

National Police Commission⁷⁷ – Selected Recommendations on Women Police

Out of its eight reports, in its fifth, the NPC devoted a large section to women police. It not only called for an increase in the representation of women in the force, which at that time stood at 0.4%, but also recommended an equal share in police work and more involvement in the police administration.⁷⁸ Its specific recommendations include:

- Women police should be given a greater role in investigations work, performing a special role dealing with crimes against women and children and tackling juveniles in conflict with law.

⁷⁶ These include the National Police Commission (1977-1981), the Ribeiro Committee (1998), the Padmanabhaiah Committee (2000); and on police legislation specifically, the Police Act Drafting Committee (2005-2006), and most recently, the Model Police Act Review Committee 2014. For a summary of recommendations made by these bodies, please see: *Police Reform Debates in India* Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2011: <http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/police/PRDebatesInIndia.pdf>.

⁷⁷ In 1979, the Government of India undertook a comprehensive review of the policing system at the national level and constituted the National Police Commission to “examine the role and performance of the police both as a law enforcement agency, and as an institution to protect the rights of the citizens enshrined in the Constitution”. The NPC published eight reports in total over a period of five years covering a range of organisational reforms, including recruitment processes, police roles and duties, investigations, revamp of the constabulary, training, police-public relations, accountability mechanisms and other modernisation requirements.

⁷⁸ National Police Commission (1980), Government of India, *Fifth Report*, pp. 119-122: <http://bprd.nic.in/writereaddata/linkimages/2047042656-FIFTH%20REPORT.pdf>.

- Women police need to be recruited in much larger numbers than at present, preferably in the ranks of Assistant Sub-Inspectors or Sub-Inspectors of Police rather than in the rank of constables.
- Women police should become an integral part of the police organisation and should not constitute a separate branch with recruitment and promotion confined to that branch alone.
- Generally, women should be given the same training as male officers with emphasis on special training in dealing with women and children in public order situations.

As the latest reform initiative, the 2006 Supreme Court judgement⁷⁹ set out a series of directives aimed to ensure the police are insulated from illegitimate political interference; have professionalised internal systems of management based on transparent criteria; and are more accountable through dedicated police complaints bodies. While the Court's reform agenda synthesises select recommendations made by the NPC and others on police reform, it neglects to mention the need for diversity in policing nor the special value of having women in policing.

While binding on the Centre and states, no state has implemented the Court's directives fully; in fact, most of them have done quite the opposite. State after state has delayed compliance, diluted and subverted the intended mechanisms for oversight, or passed legislation which militates against the intent of the directives. The Centre fares no better. This is the extent of outright resistance to any kind of institutional change. The original petitioners continue to seek honest implementation in a matter that took ten years to come to judgement

The Numbers and Representation of Women in Policing

Kerala was the first Indian state to have women in the police force, beginning with the first woman inducted into the then Travancore Royal Police in 1933. Thereafter recruitment of women into the police in other states began only after independence, and even then it was sporadic at best. It was not until 1972 that the first woman was appointed to the Indian Police Service. By the time the National Police Commission completed its eight reports in 1981, women accounted for a mere 3000 or 0.4% of the total police in the country.

Violence against women in India is coupled with little access to remedies. The particularly brutal gang-rape and murder of a young woman in Delhi in 2012 brought to the fore the numerous dangers women have to contend with in daily life.⁸⁰ This led to calls for greater attention to the problem of violence against women, and in tandem, the need for more women in policing. Beyond the value of greater diversity as a good in itself, it was felt that more women can improve the sensitivity and quality of police response to women by changing the internal culture. The figures do show a slight increase in the numbers since then; but after the heat of the moment died down, efforts to bring in more women as a minimum condition of improved response have been sporadic and the pace of inducting women remains glacial.

Statistics on police numbers in general and of women police in particular have been gathered and published by the Bureau of Police Research and Development since 2005. As on 1/1/2014, the total strength of police in India stands at 1,722,786.⁸¹ For a population of 1.22 billion, this leaves a ratio of approximately one police officer for every 708 people.

79 *Prakash Singh and Others v Union of India and Others (2006) 8 SCC 1*

80 The gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old paramedic student on 16 December 2012, in Delhi, led to unprecedented public outrage and street protests across the country demanding safety for women. A high-level committee of jurists was constituted by the Government of India on 23 December 2012 to propose amendments to criminal law to provide for expanded offences, quicker trial, and enhanced punishment for sexual assault. The Committee submitted its report on 23 January 2013. Amendments to the Indian Penal Code 1872, the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act 1873 were passed by Parliament in April 2013.

81 Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (2014), *Data on Police Organizations in India as on January 1 2014*, p.32: <http://www.bprd.nic.in/showfile.asp?lid=1291>.

Coming to women, there are 105,325 female police officers in India, making up a national average of 6.11% of the police, as follows:

Table 3: State-Wise Strength of Women Police as a Percentage of the Total Police Force

State/UT	Total Police Force	Total Woman Police (numbers)	Total Women Police as % of police	Rank (1-35, highest-lowest)
Chandigarh	7,181	1,017	14.16	1
Tamil Nadu	1,11,448	13842	12.42	2
Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) Islands	3,947	445	11.27	3
Himachal Pradesh	14,024	1,552	11.07	4
Maharashtra	1,71,359	17,957	10.48	5
D & N Haveli	261	26	9.96	6
Daman & Diu	373	34	9.12	7
Odisha	51,396	4,381	8.52	8
Uttarakhand	18,187	1,528	8.4	9
Manipur	24,832	2,040	8.22	10
Sikkim	4,281	333	7.78	11
Delhi	75,704	5,413	7.15	12
Rajasthan	92,330	6,568	7.11	13
Haryana	41,112	2,734	6.65	14
Punjab	73,782	4,761	6.44	15
Kerala	47,782	3,067	6.42	16
Goa	5,924	366	6.18	17
Lakshadweep	264	16	6.06	18
Mizoram	9,895	568	5.74	19
Puducherry	3,143	165	5.25	20
Arunachal Pradesh	11,247	582	5.17	21
Jharkhand	56,439	2,906	5.15	22
Karnataka	72,011	3,682	5.11	23
Madhya Pradesh	86,946	4,190	4.82	24
West Bengal	79,476	3,791	4.77	25
Andhra Pradesh	1,06,635	4,622	4.33	26
Chhattisgarh	54,693	2,348	4.29	27
Uttar Pradesh	1,68,851	7,238	4.29	27
Gujarat	74,023	2,691	3.64	29
Bihar	68,819	2,341	3.4	30
Tripura	23,619	777	3.29	31
Jammu & Kashmir	72,196	2,252	3.12	32
Meghalaya	11,453	329	2.87	33
Nagaland	24,030	253	1.05	34
Assam	55,033	510	0.93	35
All India	17,22,786	1,05,325	6.11	

Overall, taken year on year, the numbers and representation of women in the police has grown, albeit slowly. But at 6.11% in 2014, the national average is still far from the ideal target of 33% set by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2009 and reinforced again in 2013.⁸²

Table 4: Year-Wise Total Percentage of Women Police

2014	2013	2012	2011	2010 ⁸³	2009	2008
1,05,325	97,518	84,479	71,756	66,153	56,667	57,466
6.11%	5.87%	5.3%	4.6%	4.2%	6%	3.9%

Likewise, within states and Union Territories, the figures have steadily increased, with some notable improvements. As of 1/1/2014, Chandigarh (14.16%), Tamil Nadu (12.42%) and A&N Islands (11.27%) recorded the highest representation of women police.⁸⁴ Assam (0.93%), Nagaland (1.05%) and Meghalaya (2.87%) are lagging behind the most. Looking back over the last few years, Chandigarh, Tamil Nadu and A&N Islands have consistently done better in recruiting women, with Nagaland and Assam at the bottom of the table.⁸⁵

Of the states visited for this report,⁸⁶ a closer look at the numbers reveal some gains made:

- Meghalaya has succeeded in almost doubling its numbers of female police officers from 174 in 2008 to 329 in 2014, constituting an increase of 1% overall.
- Haryana has doubled its numbers and almost trebled the percentage of female officers from 1358 / 2.7% in 2008 to 2734 / 6.65% in 2014. A specific increase from 2011-2012 of almost 1000 additional officers saw the percentage go from 4.9% to 7.5%.
- Jharkhand has seen an increase from 1701 to 2906; with a particular increase of almost 1,000 officers between 2013 and 2014 which saw the percentage jump from 3.4% to 5.15%.
- Kerala has been pretty consistent over those years with no significant increases or decreases. The numbers currently stand at 3067 officers constituting 6.42% of the force.
- Rajasthan has almost doubled the percentage and trebled the numbers of female police from 4% / 2,662 in 2008 to 7.11% / 6,568 in 2014.

82 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Advisory (2009), F. NO.15011/48/2009-SC/ST-W: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/pdf/AdCrime-Agnst-Women170909.pdf, and Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Advisory dated (2013), D.O. No. 15011/21/2013 – SC/ST – W: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/AdvisoryWomenPolice-290513.pdf.

83 The drop in percentage here is explained by an increase of approximately 500,000 in the numbers of the actual police force overall.

84 Both Chandigarh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands are Union Territories with smaller police forces. Clearly, efforts have been made to recruit women, but base percentages will automatically be higher due to the lower overall numbers.

85 Interestingly, of the five top ranking states and UTs (Chandigarh, Tamil Nadu, A&N Islands, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra) only Tamil Nadu has women police stations; in fact it has the highest number of women police stations countrywide.

86 CHRI conducted focus group discussions and interviews with women police in five Indian states for this chapter – Kerala, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Meghalaya. All of the direct quotes from women police interspersed in the chapter are from these states, but there is also reference and brief analysis of national and other state policies.

SECTION 2

Legal and Policy Framework

Legal

Non-discrimination and gender equality are fundamental principles enshrined in the Constitution of India. The Constitution not only guarantees equal rights in all spheres including civil, political, social and economic to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures for positive discrimination in favour of women. India is further committed to protecting and promoting gender equality as a signatory to several international human rights treaties, in particular, the ICCPR and CEDAW which it ratified in 1993. Other than the legal framework, the development of women more generally is a central goal of the Government of India with several policies aimed at “advancement, development and empowerment of women”.⁸⁷

The legal framework on policing consists of constitutional obligations, police laws, manuals and regulations, criminal law and procedure, special laws; as well as government and/or departmental advisories/orders/circulars/notifications. State-specific regulations and policy initiatives on recruitment, training, promotions and postings are discussed at length in Section 3 of the chapter.

Attempts have been made, to at least draft new progressive police legislation. Several Commissions and committees have drafted model Police Acts to replace the 1861 Act – first, it was the NPC which drafted a Model Police Bill, and subsequently the Ministry of Home Affairs constituted two Committees (the first in 2006 and the second in 2013) to draft, and then further improve and amend, a Model Police Act. All of these legislative models have been produced to serve as templates for new police laws across the country, but none have been fully adopted by either the states or the Centre. Representation of women was addressed for the first time in the 2006 Model Police Act which called for “adequate gender representation in the composition of the police service” and required “each police station to have a Women and Child Protection Desk staffed, as far as possible, by women police personnel, to record complaints of crimes against women and children and to deal with the tasks relating to administration of special legislations relating to women and children”.⁸⁸ Although this is a step forward, the 2006 Model Act does not explicitly mention gender equality as a core principle governing the police service nor does it define “adequate representation”.

In 2013, a second Committee re-examined the 2006 model and produced a new draft Model Police Act in 2014. The 2014 model takes greater account of the need for diversity in policing and for more equitable representation of women, but still does not include proportions.⁸⁹ As a result, none of these models influence the numbers on the ground.

87 At the national level, the main policy documents include the National Policy on Empowerment for Women formulated in 2001 which talks of drawing up women-friendly personnel policies to encourage effective participation in the developmental process. See Ministry of Women and Child Development, *National Policy on Empowerment for Women*: <http://wcd.nic.in/empwomen.htm>. The other core policy documents promoting women's development are the Five Year Plans developed and executed by the Planning Commission of India. The 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) is currently underway. It holds gender equality as a core development goal in itself. The key strategies for gender equality include economic empowerment, social and physical infrastructure, enabling laws, women's participation in governance, inclusiveness, engendering national policies/programmes and mainstreaming gender through gender budgeting. See Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, *XII Five Year Plan, Report of the Working Group on Women's Agency and Empowerment*, pg. 19; Planning Commission, Government of India, *Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017)*, Volume III, p. 166.

88 Section 12(6), *Model Police Act 2006*.

89 Section 10(2) of the Draft Model Police Act 2014 states that the composition of the police service “shall, as far as possible, reflect adequate representation of all sections of society, provided that the number of women in the Police Service be adequate and be decided in consultation with the State Police Chief”.

In the meanwhile, criminal law and jurisprudence have considerably expanded statutory functions to be performed by women police. These range from requiring arrest of a woman to be made by a female police officer⁹⁰ and search of a woman suspected of concealing any article by a woman police officer only.⁹¹ New laws relating to sexual crimes against children and women were passed in 2012 and 2013 respectively, giving exclusive functions to women police in the registration of complaints and recording of victim statements.⁹² These specific legal mandates given to women police make the necessity for more women in the police, especially at the police station level, even more urgent.

Policy

Governments, prodded by the stormy public discourse on violence against women, have recognised the need to facilitate women to approach the police and increase their sense of safety in public places; and the necessity of women police to do this.⁹³ The Government of India has taken several initiatives to prod states to increase the number of women in their police forces. The target of 33% representation of women in police set by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2009 (reiterated in 2013) has since become the main policy thrust of the central government; successive governments have been pushing states to take affirmative action to this effect.⁹⁴

Ministry of Home Affairs Advisories on Women Police: Getting the Numbers Up

Ministries of the central government frequently issue “advisories” to states. This advice is given to recommend minimum standards, new measures, or operating guidelines for executing law or policies. These advisories are not binding orders, they are just suggestions for improving decision-making and the framing and implementation of law or policies. Following the 2009 advisory setting a target of 33% reservation, the MHA has since issued several other advisories prescribing roles for women police to facilitate greater numbers. In 2013, the Ministry reiterated the 33% target and recommended each police station to have at least three women sub-inspectors and ten women police constables to ensure women help desks are staffed at all times.⁹⁵ More recently, the Ministry has proposed creating Investigative Units for Crimes against Women (IUCAW) at police stations in crime prone districts across states.⁹⁶ These units would be constituted on a cost sharing basis between the Centre and the states, and are to have around 15 specialised investigators dealing specifically with crimes against women. Of the 15 staff, at least one-third are required to be women personnel. It is good that these advisories seek to increase the numbers of women police and also give women frontline duties in police stations. But there are also constraints, and particular concerns with the establishment of IUCAWs.⁹⁷ Filling these numbers will require an infusion of women at different ranks. Recruitment processes take their own time and are possible only against vacancies or new sanctioned posts. Funds and infrastructure will inevitably be needed. Implementation will have to be incremental.

90 Proviso to Section 46 (1), *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973*.

91 Section 51(2), *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973*.

92 See Sections 24 and 26 of the *Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012*; and proviso to Section 154 *Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973*.

93 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Advisory dated 22 April 2013, D.O. No. 15011/21/2013 – SC/ST – W: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/AdvisoryWomenPolice-290513.pdf.

94 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Advisory (2009), F. NO.15011/48/2009-SC/ST-W: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/pdf/AdCrime-Agnst-Women170909.pdf.

95 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Advisory (2013), D.O. No. 15011/21/2013 – SC/ST – W: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/AdvisoryWomenPolice-290513.pdf.

96 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Advisory (2015), 15011/72/2014 – SC/ST – W: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/CrimesagainstWomen0601.PDF.

97 The feasibility of establishing IUCAWs has to be examined. One of the directives of the Supreme Court in the 2006 case on police reform orders the separation of investigation from law and order work of the police. Most suggested models require specialised investigative units to be set up at the police station, district and state levels. Also, many states have crimes against women cells or Special district units in place on crimes against women and children. Some states have significant numbers of all-women police stations. The need for IUCAWs must be seen against the existing units, cells, or women police stations already in place in each district and at the state level. It must be ensured that duties are not needlessly duplicated or new infrastructure wasted.

Many states have acted on the MHA's advisories to adopt a reservation policy for women in police forces. To date, 12 states – Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Bihar, Sikkim, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tripura, Telangana, and Uttarakhand – and the Centre (for all seven Union Territories) have a reservation policy of 30% or more for women in their police forces.⁹⁸

Table 5: Reservation for Women in Police

States	Reservation %	Year
Maharashtra	30	1971
Rajasthan	30	1989
Tamil Nadu	30	1989
Odisha	33	1992
Bihar	35	2013
Sikkim	30	2013
Gujarat	33	2014
Madhya Pradesh	30	2014
Uttarakhand	15	2014
Jharkhand	33	2015
Centre (for the Union Territories)	33	2015
Tripura	30	2015
Telangana	35	2015

Generally, reservations apply at the recruitment entry points of Constable and Sub-Inspector rank. All across, however, the target remains very much on paper. Nowhere is there a detailed recruitment plan or a timeline for achieving the target. This is why even in states which adopted reservation for women in police decades ago, the highest representation is only at 12%, still a long gulf from the 33%. Maharashtra has had a reservation policy (30%) in place since 1971 (the longest running at 44 years to the present), but women police are barely pushing 10% of the force. Tamil Nadu has attained 12% after 26 years; Rajasthan only 7% in the same period; and Odisha is not even at 10% after 23 years. Even with evidence of minor incremental gains, these dismal figures reveal the lack of priority to actually fill the numbers with women in police departments.

Further, the adoption of a reservation policy does not always mean there is a genuine acceptance of women from the highest police and political leadership. After the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh announced that the reservation for women in the state police should be raised to 33% from the present 30%, both the Police Headquarters and the Home Department reportedly objected on the ground that the majority of policing work can only be done by men and an infusion of greater numbers of women police would be detrimental to the force.⁹⁹ In spite of an apparently welcoming approach towards women, deeply engrained discriminatory attitudes can still persist to block women's entry into the police.

Key Policy Initiatives

There are several initiatives which have facilitated research, discussion, the convening of stakeholders, and the framing of recommendations on a gamut of issues relating to women in policing. These are positive in themselves, but are stymied by a slow pace of implementation.

⁹⁸ As there is no single source with the latest information on the states that have adopted reservation policies, this information has been collected from a combination of media articles, parliamentary committee reports and police and government websites. This is the information, to date, as far as CHRI could verify.

⁹⁹ EenaduIndia (2015), "33% women reservation in MP police draws objection", 3 June 2015: <http://www.eenaduindia.com/State/MadhyaPradesh/2015/06/03164807/33-women-reservation-in-MP-police-draws-objection.vpf>.

1. Parliamentary Committee Reports

In 2012-2013, and again in 2014-2015, the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women took up the issue of women police to “review the working conditions of women police in India”. This Committee was constituted on 23 September 2012 and consisted of 20 members of the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and ten members of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House). The term of the Committee is one year; it is reconstituted every year. This was the first effort by a Parliamentary Committee to examine the issue of women in policing. The Committee’s findings and recommendations not only provide a strong impetus for improving the gender ratio within police organisations but also, importantly, point out the changes in organisational structure and policies which have to go hand in hand for women to play a meaningful role in policing.

Parliamentary Committee¹⁰⁰ Reports on “Working Condition of Women in Police Force”: State of follow-up

The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women published two reports on women police – the first report, published in September 2013 titled “Working Conditions of Women in Police Force”,¹⁰¹ reviews steps taken by central and state governments to increase representation and improve working conditions of women in police forces. The Ministry of Home Affairs, on behalf of the central government, along with state governments made submissions before the Committee which then laid down a series of recommendations for follow-up action. The Committee’s substantive recommendations are interspersed throughout this chapter. In December 2014, the newly constituted Committee¹⁰² published its second report¹⁰³ on Action Taken by the Government on its recommendations. Of the total 14 recommendations from the first report:

- Nine have been accepted by the government. A number of these have been communicated to the states in the advisory issued in August 2014 which asks states to initiate special recruitment drives, ensure basic amenities like resting rooms and toilets for women personnel at each police station, provide equal opportunities to women personnel particularly in allocation of duties, and effectively deal with reported cases of sexual harassment.¹⁰⁴
- On three recommendations, the Committee expressed disappointment with the government’s response and replies. These include linking of modernisation funds¹⁰⁵ granted by the Centre to the states with progress achieved in increasing representation of women in the police force; constructing residential accommodation exclusively for women police personnel; and seeking time-bound Action Taken Reports on implementation of resolutions passed in the National Conferences for Women in Police (details below). The Ministry has either held these steps as unfeasible or not yet finalised any specific measure.

100 Parliamentary Committees are appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the Speaker of the House. These committees work under the direction of the Speaker and present their reports to the House and the Speaker.

101 Parliament of India, Lok Sabha, Committee on Empowerment of Women (2013), *Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha on “Working Conditions of Women in Police Force”*, [hereafter referred to as Parliament of India, (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha], p. 13: http://164.100.47.134/lssccommittee/Empowerment%20of%20Women/15_Empowerment_of_Women_21.pdf.

102 The Committee on Empowerment of Women for the year 2014-2015 was constituted on 1 September 2014 for a term of one year. It consists of 20 members of Lok Sabha (Lower House) and 10 members of Rajya Sabha (Upper House).

103 Parliament of India, Lok Sabha, Committee on Empowerment of Women, (2014), *Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, “Working Conditions of Women in Police Force”* (Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Twenty-First Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2012-2013)...), [hereafter referred to as Parliament of India, (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha], p. 23: http://164.100.47.134/lssccommittee/Empowerment%20of%20Women/16_Empowerment_of_Women_2.pdf.

104 At present, this advisory is not available on the MHA’s website. All references to it have been taken from the Parliament of India (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha: http://164.100.47.134/lssccommittee/Empowerment%20of%20Women/16_Empowerment_of_Women_2.pdf.

105 Modernisation of Police Force Scheme is a scheme of the Government of India to provide financial support to state governments for modernising their police forces. It started in 1969 and covers expenses incurred on items such as weapons, equipment, upgrading of police stations/outposts, forensic science laboratories and training infrastructure. For more details, see Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, <http://mha.nic.in/policemodern>.

- The government's reply is awaited on two recommendations. These include suggestions on gender modules for incorporation in police training of different cadres, and performance audit of All-Women Police Stations.

2. National Conferences for Women in Police

The Bureau of Police Research and Development, a wing of the Ministry of Home Affairs, organises a national conference for women in police biannually in collaboration with a state police force, bringing together women police across ranks and states. Beginning in 2002, this is its most enduring initiative with six conferences held so far – New Delhi (2002), Mussorie, Uttarakhand (2005), Panchkula, Haryana (2009), Bhubaneswar, Odisha (2010), Thrissur, Kerala (2012) and Guwahati, Assam (2014). The conferences have repeatedly stressed the need for increased representation of women and recommended several measures including 33% reservation, special recruitment drives, a common cadre for men and women, and better facilities for women.

Sluggish States: Delayed Reporting

Recommendations are only as good as their implementation. While the national conferences evolved mechanisms to spur implementation, governments are failing to act. At the end of each national conference, a set of recommendations are put forward which are then circulated to states and Union Territories by the central government. Action-Taken Reports (ATRs) are required to be submitted to the MHA but this is not done regularly. If governments are not reporting on action taken on the recommendations and resolutions passed by the national conferences, this inevitably means action is not being taken, or is inordinately delayed. For example, before the sixth national conference, only 17 states/UTs submitted the ATR.¹⁰⁶ The central government itself has been quite tardy in following up on the ATRs. It only requested for ATRs six months after the national conference in 2014.¹⁰⁷ In its report, recognising that the very intent of the national conferences is being wasted, the Parliamentary Committee cautioned: *“If the State Governments lack the desired initiative to implement the recommendations passed in the Conferences concerning the well-being of women police, the very purpose of organizing these Conferences seems defeated”*.¹⁰⁸ The Committee recommended that a strict timeline for submission of ATRs be set for the Centre and states.¹⁰⁹

3. Micro Mission on Gender Crimes and Gender-Related Issues

A National Police Mission was set up by the Government of India in 2005 to guide, monitor and review the transformation of policing into an “efficient, effective, and responsive agency both as an instrument of state and as a service to citizens”.¹¹⁰ It functions through a four-tier system which includes an Empowered Steering Group, an Executive Committee, a Mission Directorate and Micro Missions. Seven Micro-Missions have so far been constituted to develop projects focusing on different aspects of policing. The Seventh Micro-Mission looks at gender crimes and gender-related issues with special emphasis on rape and police response, including issues and concerns related to women in policing. For instance, it has discussed drafting a model gender policy for police departments as well as performance audits of all-women police stations.¹¹¹ It consists of 27 IPS officers of the rank of Superintendent of Police up to Additional DGP, drawn from different states and Union Territories.

106 Parliament of India (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, p. 23.

107 Parliament of India (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, p. 25.

108 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, Recommendation SI. No.10, Para No. 2.10.

109 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, Recommendation SI. No.10, Para No. 2.10.

110 National Police Mission website: <http://bprd.nic.in/index1.asp?lang=1&linkid=66&lid=374>.

111 Unfortunately there are no meeting minutes available on the Micro Mission webpage. CHRI can confirm these discussions took place as its staff were present at the deliberations.

4. All-Women Police Stations and Other Similar Policy Measures

Looking at the policy landscape over the years, a major preoccupation is the need to address violence against women and promote women's safety, with women police as a prime vector.¹¹² One of the earliest measures was the constitution of all-women police stations (AWPS) to focus exclusively on crimes against women. These are precisely what their name states – exclusive police stations, separate from the regular police station of an area but under the jurisdiction of the district Superintendent of Police, staffed mainly by women police to receive, register, and where possible, investigate crimes against women. The intent is to facilitate women to report crimes to the police in a space perceived safer than a male-dominated police station. There is no central advisory or direction to set up AWPS, it is purely at states' discretion. All states have not established them, though some do have sizeable numbers. Tamil Nadu leads with 198 all-women police stations at present.

At the policy level, there is a tussle over whether it is more effective to simply increase the number of women police in police stations through dedicated mechanisms such as a helpdesk rather than create an exclusive all-women police station. The Model Police Act, 2006¹¹³ and the 2009 MHA advisory suggested the set-up of a “woman and child protection desk” in every police station, staffed as far as possible by women police. Delhi, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Telangana are some of the states that have instituted helpdesks. Responding to the difference in opinion across states, both the Parliamentary Committee and the National Police Mission have intervened with suggestions (full details follow in a section below). The conflict in opinions is yet to be resolved.

Overall, there is no dearth of policy initiatives or proposed measures aimed to increase the numbers of women police, and some are even geared to improve working conditions and infrastructure. At the same time, in the backdrop of strong public sentiment and political pressure to deliver on women's safety, there are also visible risks in the design of measures to increase the numbers of women police without careful planning. The preponderance of “women-only” helpdesks, investigative units at the police station, exclusive police stations, district and state-level cells or units need to be examined for duplication, feasibility and cost benefit. As the sections below demonstrate, there are a host of basic operational and functional problems confronting women on duty that remain unaddressed. Representation of women itself is still sorely inadequate, nowhere near one-third of a police force. These must be addressed before rushing to measures which may not even be realistic to achieve.

There is one more crucial aspect which must be mentioned. Empirical evidence strongly suggests that women victims of crime are more comfortable talking with policewomen. This is absolutely relevant in India. While every accommodation for this must be made, it has often been used to ghettoise women police's tasking and “freeze” their roles on the excuse that “women's complaints must go to women”. This reinforces stereotypes, delays attitudinal changes within the majority male cohort, and prevents the police as a whole from working through policies and practices about how best it can shape itself to respond to the particular needs of half the population. These ill-effects must also be kept in mind to regularly re-assess and strive for the needed balance.

¹¹² This has been hugely reinforced post 2012-13, particularly as women police have been given statutory duties in relation to crimes against women and children.

¹¹³ Section 12(6), *Model Police Act, 2006*.

SECTION 3

Experiences and Challenges

Attitude of the Public

In the states studied, there were mixed experiences with many women officers expressing the belief that the public respected them more than their male colleagues. Nonetheless, examples were cited of problematic public attitudes and experiences such as being stared at on traffic duty. In surveys conducted among women police in Haryana and Kerala, the vast majority of respondents at 69.7% said that the public respected women police equally with male police, while 18% felt that they were respected more, and 10.6% felt that they were respected less than their male colleagues.¹¹⁴

More than a Uniform

A pattern observed across the five states was the police uniform shapes both the way women police are able to deal with society at large, as well as how the public views them. When asked about three things they like about their jobs, women personnel across states mentioned the pride of wearing the khaki uniform. For some women, the uniform helps them stand up to patriarchal attitudes, both at home and in the public, more confidently. For others, it makes them feel safer while traveling on the roads, particularly at night. The uniform therefore represents more than service to the nation for women police; it is equally a source of strength and confidence.

The Parliamentary Committee report cites research done by the BPRD suggesting that the public's attitude towards women in police was a significant problem.¹¹⁵ This is explained in other research as follows:

"The public's view of policing has not changed. The public still see the police as a militaristic organisation dedicated to fighting society's enemies, who must be chased down, captured and sometimes killed. It is seen as a difficult, dangerous occupation that demands strength and physical courage from its officers. Strength and physical courage are seen as male attributes that should not be expected of women. The image of the police is reinforced daily by reports in the media of encounters between police and criminals and in dozens of TV shows. However, if policing is to be seen as a suitable job for a woman, this image must change and it is therefore important to portray the more mundane reality of policing, which includes many tasks that require the kind of patience that women can draw upon".¹¹⁶

The Parliamentary Committee notes the important impact that more women police can have on public attitudes towards policing as a whole:

"The visibility of women police in police forces would dispel negative sentiments of distrust against the police force and would boost public confidence".¹¹⁷

114 One person did not provide a response.

115 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 18.

116 Natarajan, M (2014), "Police culture and the integration of women officers in India", *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol 16 No. 2, 2014, pp. 124-139: <http://psm.sagepub.com/content/16/2/124.full.pdf+html>.

117 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 25.

Recruitment Processes

Recruitment to the police in India takes place at four levels – three at the state level, and one at the central level, that is, the Indian Police Service (IPS). At the state level, the three levels are Constable, Sub-Inspector/Assistant Sub-Inspector, and Deputy Superintendent of Police. At the Constable rank, it is through direct recruitment whereas for the other ranks, it is through a combination of direct recruitment and promotion. Recruitment in the IPS is at the level of Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent of Police. The union government inducts candidates with a minimum requirement of a graduate degree directly into the IPS through qualifying in a civil services exam.

The recruitment procedures for men and women candidates are the same except for physical standards which have been relaxed for women. For example, in Jharkhand, in addition to being exempt from “tests of running or rope climbing as prescribed for male police”, admissible relaxations in height and upper age limit apply to women police.¹¹⁸

Many state police forces continue to have separate cadres for men and women at state-level entry points. Disadvantage to women starts here. The effect of a separate cadre means that for a particular rank, only a certain number (usually very minimal) of positions are reserved for women, limiting the number of vacancies that can be filled by women recruits. This has a knock-on effect on opportunities for promotion and thereby career growth for women, as vacancies and seniority lists are also prepared separately and apportion a greater number of slots for men. Not only does this inhibit considerations of merit between the genders, it also restricts women’s upward progression in the police. The demand for a common cadre for recruitment of men and women has been repeatedly stressed at the National Conference for Women Police. This policy change is essential.

Challenging a Separate Cadre System (Central Reserve Police Force)¹¹⁹ in Court

In the case *Bilju AT v Union of India & Ors*¹²⁰, Rule 5(A)(d) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Rules, 1995 was challenged in the Delhi High Court on the grounds that it prescribed a separate cadre for women incumbents up to the rank of Inspector for the *Mahila* (woman) Battalion, although the women were subject to the same conditions with regard to age limits, educational qualifications, reservations, and training as their male counterparts. Men and women were recruited through a common process. There was no distinction in their duties and functions. However, by being relegated to a separate cadre, women personnel lost out on both seniority and promotions. The High Court held this violated their Fundamental Rights to Equality and Non-Discrimination, guaranteed by Articles 14 and 16, respectively, of the Constitution of India and struck down Rule 5(A)(d).

The CRPF appealed to the Supreme Court (SC) against this commendable ruling, contending that there were operational necessities which made such differential treatment necessary, hence it could not be held as unconstitutional.¹²¹ The SC accepted the CRPF’s contentions and ruled in its favour by setting aside the High Court’s verdict. The judges held that Rule 5(a)(d) was not unconstitutional. Nevertheless, it is significant to mention that the SC, unlike the High Court, did not go into the substantive issue of discrimination against the CRPF women. The Court neglected to analyse how the Rule had a detrimental effect on women personnel’s career prospects. Instead, it proceeded on a *technical* ground, that the petitioners had not challenged the government notification which created a separate Mahila battalion. Rule 5A (1)(d) only facilitated the staffing of such a battalion, and thus, the first and fundamental challenge should have been against this notification, according to the Court.

118 Rule 1287(b), Women Police, Chapter 44, Jharkhand Police Manual, Volume One.

119 The Central Reserve Police Force is a central paramilitary organisation which this report does not deal with, but the example above sheds light on a larger common issue affecting women in police organisations so it is cited.

120 *Bilju AT v Union of India & Ors* WP (C) 8744 /2011

121 This appeal was registered as Civil Appeal No. 9840 of 2014.

To some extent, this is changing and states are adopting gender-neutral recruitment methods. Model policies are starting to articulate that there should be no differentiation on the basis of gender at recruitment. The BPRD's Model Police Manual¹²² provides a strong standard to emulate, "Except the physical measurements and physical efficiency tests which are separately prescribed for women, the recruitment procedures, qualifications, age are the same for all. There is no limit on women police officers for recruitment against vacancies in the posts in any category on the basis of merit".¹²³

The Meghalaya Police brought in the Transparent Recruitment Process¹²⁴ in 2012 based on computerised tests where candidates do not have to disclose their names. Men and women were allowed to compete equally for the Unarmed Branch Constables posts; however, for the Armed Branch, 25% of the posts were reserved for women during recruitment in 2012. Still, the process has been effective in encouraging women to participate in police recruitment and in the latest recruitment for the Sub-Inspector's rank, nearly half of the intakes (40 from a batch of 100) were women.¹²⁵

Progress is more gradual in other states. In contrast, in Kerala (known to be a progressive state on many fronts), until as recently as 2014, direct recruitment at the Sub-Inspector's rank was not open to women candidates. Last year, this policy was changed, but to a limited extent in that while SI recruitment in the civil police was opened up to women candidates, recruitment at the same rank in the police armed battalion remained closed to women and physically handicapped candidates.¹²⁶

Andhra Pradesh has done away with separate cadres for men and women. Except the physical measurements and physical efficiency tests which are separately prescribed for women, the recruitment procedures, qualifications, age are the same for all. No limit has been laid down for recruitment of women against vacancies in the posts in any category. Moreover, all postings and ranks in the police department are made common both to female and male police officers. There are also common seniority and promotion panels for all ranks irrespective of gender.¹²⁷

Another severe problem is the lack of women coming forward to join the police. This is a common refrain from policymakers and government officials making it hard to achieve set targets. Yet in Rajasthan, a relatively traditional state, women have come forward in numbers to join the police. Higher literacy rates among girls allow for awareness and knowledge of recruitment opportunities. Jhunjhunun and Sikar districts for instance, with higher literacy, have seen more women apply. Women belonging to certain areas or from families with a history of police jobs are able to not only pass recruitment, but even to become aware of vacancies in the first place. It is clear that much more needs to be done to engage in broader outreach to ensure that women are informed about recruitment opportunities or the potential of policing as a profession.

The Parliamentary Committee report also notes the need to embark on recruitment drives so that quotas could be met. It further recommended that central funds being provided to states for police modernisation be linked to progress in increasing representation of women. In a follow-up report just over a year later, figures provided by

122 The BPRD has drafted a Model Police Manual to provide a model template police manual to states seeking to update and redraft their police manuals, most of which are dated and archaic.

123 Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, *Model Police Manual, Volume I*, Section 400, p. 288: <http://bprd.nic.in/writereaddata/linkimages/1645442204-Volume%201.pdf>.

124 The Transparent Recruitment Process (TRP) is a recruitment method increasingly being adopted by states to ensure a fair, transparent, scientific, merit-based recruitment process into the police department. It relies on use of technology at various stages of recruitment to increase transparency and minimise discretion.

125 As stated by a senior officer interviewed for the research.

126 Kerala Public Service Commission (2014), Category No 253/2014-256/2014, gazette date 12/06/2014: http://www.keralapsc.gov.in/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=14587&Itemid=15; and Category No 257/2014 to 259/2014, Gazette date 12/06/2014, available at http://www.keralapsc.gov.in/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=14588&Itemid=15.

127 Andhra Pradesh Police, *Andhra Pradesh Police Manual*, Rule 923 -1-2, Chapter 48, Women Police, Part 1, Volume 3, pp. 991.

the Ministry to the Committee showed that just 18 states/UTs had succeeded in increasing numbers of women police – albeit marginally in many cases.¹²⁸ The Committee lamented that their recommendation on linkage of funds to progress was dismissed by the Ministry as not feasible. Experience shows that quotas require specific recruitment measures and drives to be filled. Without active measures and incentives such as these to encourage state police forces to act, which are absent in India, it is playing out that the quotas are largely meaningless with numbers of women police increasing only marginally, or indeed even stagnating.

Male Culture within Police Services

Given the low representation of women in the police, it is unsurprising that a culture of masculinity dominates the force. Partly, this is reflected in discrimination in allocation of duties, in postings and promotions documented in other sections. It is also seen in the pressure women police face in having to prove themselves on a day-to-day basis. Women, particularly at the subordinate ranks across states, spoke of having to work doubly hard to counter negative perceptions about their capabilities. Other common perceptions identified were that any mistakes committed by women police will invariably be viewed as affirmation of their inherent inferiority; that requests for leave are rarely acknowledged as being necessary to fulfil the burden of the dual roles that women have to play but seen as “proof” that they are not serious about their work; that if a woman raises questions, or tries to assert herself among peers and seniors, she is likely to be seen as a troublemaker. Women clearly feel aggrieved at attitudes they encounter every day:

“A male officer may be a fool of the highest order but will be taken as a good officer. The threshold of credibility is much lower for men. Women have to prove themselves”.

“There is a mentality of discrimination...there is a lot of talk about women not working but there are so many male constables in line of duty who are useless, lying drunk, no one has an issue about that. But if a woman asks for leave then everyone has a problem”.

Meghalaya Stands Out

Of the states covered, the male culture is less acute in the Meghalaya Police. This is where cultural influence comes to bear. As Meghalaya is a matrilineal society,¹²⁹ there is greater space for women’s participation in the overall workforce. While representation of women in Meghalaya Police is not very high (only 2.87%)¹³⁰, the women police interviewed did not complain of discrimination or other attitudinal cultural problems.

While recruitment of women into the police is necessary to begin breaking embedded patriarchal cultures, likewise the existing nature of the challenge is so great, particularly when numbers of women officers are still so low, that there is insufficient strength to effectively break the culture, thus creating somewhat of a vicious circle. In such circumstances it is to a certain degree perhaps understandable that women feel powerless to challenge the status quo and instead either internalise or adopt the culture and stereotypes.

As the Parliamentary Committee observed, “Women police lose their innate qualities of compassion and sympathy over the years owing to the work pressure in policing and end up possessing the rude behaviour that is found as an inevitable attribute of police sub-culture”.¹³¹

128 Parliament of India (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, p. 1.

129 A matrilineal society is one where lineage runs through maternal ancestry, and women have more authority than male family members in matters of inheritance and other property rights.

130 Bureau of Police Research and Development (2014), Data on Police Organizations in India, p. 135.

131 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 34.

A recent study conducted in Tamil Nadu contained some worrying findings on the extent to which – despite the increased representation of women and their exposure to a wide range of duties – women police are still negatively perceived by their male counterparts. Perhaps most concerning was that there was general agreement between both men and women officers that most police work was performed more effectively by men, leading to the conclusion that negative perceptions were internalised by women. It found that women:

*“have been exposed to the full range of police duties, most of which they claim to be interested in performing. Despite this they seem unable to shrug off the criticisms of their male counterparts with the result that few of them (27.6%) aspire to a fully integrated role in policing where women do the same tasks as men”.*¹³²

Ultimately, while the male-dominated subculture was found to be an important contributory factor, the study concluded that the systemic ills of policing were in fact the root cause:

*“It is simplistic to put all the blame on the negative attitudes of male officers. The truth is that the paramilitary model of policing, the regimented daily regime, the long hours of duty and the heavy premium placed on physical fitness all impose a greater burden on women than male officers”.*¹³³

Continuing to increase the numbers, appointing women to senior positions where leadership capabilities can be demonstrated and proved, are necessary to break the existing culture and cycle. With different skill sets and personalities, women are well suited to serve as a catalyst for a transformation in the Indian police and must be encouraged and supported to serve as role models of lawful, efficient and accountable policing.

Harassment at the Workplace

In late December 2013, a law protecting women against sexual harassment at the workplace was enacted in India. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 seeks to protect women from *sexual harassment* at their place of work. This statute superseded guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India.¹³⁴ Some key features include:

- The Act defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints.
- Every employer with 10 or more employees is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee which has the powers of civil courts for gathering evidence.
- The Committee is required to complete the inquiry within a time period of 90 days.
- The inquiry process should be confidential and the Act lays down a penalty on the person who breaches confidentiality.
- The Act requires employers to develop policies against sexual harassment.
- There are penalties for employers for non-compliance with the provisions of the Act and repeated violations may lead to higher penalties and cancellation of licence or registration to conduct business.
- The government can order an officer to inspect workplaces and records related to sexual harassment in any organisation.

132 Natarajan, M., “Police culture and the integration of women officers in India”, *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol 16, No 2, p. 135.

133 Natarajan, M., “Police culture and the integration of women officers in India”, *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol 16, No 2, p. 135.

134 *Vishaka and Ors vs State of Rajasthan & Ors AIR 1997 SC 3011*

Police departments, as much as any other employer, are duty-bound to implement their obligations under the Act. Because the law has come into effect less than two years ago, the levels of implementation have not been formally examined. This becomes more difficult because sexual harassment within police departments is not readily or easily acknowledged with many claiming it simply does not exist. Senior leaders in particular were unwilling to acknowledge and/or share information about the problem. This contrasted sharply with answers to face-to-face questions and in focus groups with junior ranks where the atmosphere was more candid:

“It’s very rampant in police departments”.

“Sexual harassment is an issue and this is suppressed”.

“Sexual harassment of women at the workplace is considered normal in the police. The general attitude is that if you have come to work you have to learn to bear it”.

Yet, the problem remains highly unreported. In the two states of Kerala and Haryana, our surveys revealed only five out of 66 respondents (7.5%) said they had faced sexual harassment, and 60 (91%) said they had not. Many factors are behind why the problem remain unreported, one of which is the high levels of ignorance about where or how to complain. Knowledge levels in relation to the systems and structures that are supposed to have been put in place remains low across police forces. In Kerala and Haryana, 18 out of 66 (27.3%) of respondents did not know they could complain about harassment. It is difficult to pinpoint whether this is because the structures have not been established or there is a lack of awareness about them. In either case, it is problematic since there are obligations in the Act for employers to engage in education programmes and the lack of knowledge displayed would seem to indicate that this is not taking place.

The most common views expressed as to why it is not reported were that the woman would be identified as a problem:

“Who can one complain to? Women feel reluctant to complain because they feel that the senior will take it out in another way – the woman will build image of a complainer”.

“If a woman complains, it will be said she has made it a habit to complain and is identified as being a troublemaker”.

At present, reporting that does happen is typically to the senior and/or supervisory officer, even where internal complaints committees have been constituted, at least on paper. In such a scenario, a lot depends on the approachability of individual officers. It can be particularly difficult for women constables to approach seniors in their own police station who they report to on a daily basis. Another concern that came forth was a lack of adequate action against accused officers, despite internal inquiries confirming the allegations. In the absence of poor data on sexual harassment within departments, it is difficult to ascertain the level of seriousness with which internal inquiries are treated and perpetrators brought to account. It is precisely to overcome these concerns and loopholes in the process that departments must establish complaint committees as mandated by the Act.

In states where committees have been set up, such as in Kerala, not much is being done by way of making them functional and effective. Members of the committee interviewed for this research themselves had not undergone substantial training and orientation, let alone arranging workshops to educate other members of their mandates and procedures to file a complaint.

Overall, the sense that emerges is that there is a problem but its extent is unknown. From the difference between the surveys and oral renditions of reality, it would not be incautious to suggest that sexual harassment in the work place is more than is reported. Indeed one common view repeatedly expressed was the clear understanding that

it would not go well for the woman brash enough to report it to higher ups. Uncertainty of institutional response means that the issue will remain subterranean in the absence of active implementation by the police leadership.

Even the Parliamentary Committee report which is so positive and progressive on several matters appears to brush this problem under the carpet as its findings are contradictory. In its initial inquiry, it asked for data from the Ministry on whether complaint cells had been established, whether complaints were disposed of expeditiously, the number of complaints, description of complaints, number of persons punished/convicted, number of pending complaints, duration of their pendency and the reasons. In response, the Ministry replied that this data was being collected from states/UTs. Despite this lack of data and information, the Committee concluded that the Supreme Court guidelines were being “*scrupulously implemented in police organisations*”.¹³⁵ Perhaps the Committee did actually receive the assuring data to arrive at this conclusion, but this is not evident in the report. Furthermore, in the follow-up report, the government reply was again that “*states have been requested to provide any available data and report is awaited*”.¹³⁶ The Committee paid little further attention to the issue, categorising it as one where the government response was satisfactory. Although there was the transition from the Supreme Court guidelines to the legislative obligations in that time period, still the nature of the data that requires collection remains the same.

The Committee squandered a valuable opportunity to monitor and address a pressing issue. It is also clear from this research that it was premature for the Committee to reach the conclusion it did, as it is not evident that the law is being “scrupulously implemented” and in fact much more data and information is needed on whether the relevant structures have been put in place, how complaints are being dealt with and whether the necessary education and awareness-raising has in fact taken place. So the early signals are disconcerting and there is a risk that a very strong and impressive legislation – if not actually enforced – will be rendered meaningless.

Appropriate Facilities and Policies

Across the board, the lack of appropriate and often basic facilities and policies to accommodate women police officers and ensure they are able to fulfil their duties to the best of their ability was starkly apparent. The key issues emerging are restrooms/toilets; accommodation; maternity and childcare facilities; and the need for flexible or shift working. To look at each of these in turn:

Restrooms/Toilets

One of the most recurring themes in the research was the paucity of toilet and restroom facilities for women. In fact, many police stations do not have toilets at all, let alone separate toilets and restrooms for women personnel. Any available facility is often badly maintained and unsanitary. The men have long been used to substandard conditions which they should not have to tolerate, but nevertheless do. The great outdoors offers an alternative for them which is simply not an alternative that women can avail of, or should be asked to tolerate.

In urban areas, the problem is most acute for traffic police where women police face a lot of problems in the absence of adequate and clean public toilets. A female traffic constable in Rajasthan stated categorically that the toughest part of her job was unavailability of toilet facilities. In another instance, a woman described how she does not drink water (even in extremely hot conditions) to avoid the need to use a toilet.

A revealing finding is the difference in amenities available for IPS officers and state cadre officers. In Rajasthan, it was pointed out that the new police headquarters building has separate women’s toilets but those are for IPS officers only, and not accessible to Rajasthan Police Service (RPS) cadre officers. Such practices are not

¹³⁵ Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 59.

¹³⁶ Parliament of India (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, p. 42.

unique to Rajasthan alone and are symptomatic of a deep-rooted culture of hierarchy that characterises police organisations in general. It shows that providing amenities alone does not address the problem. It is equally crucial to address hierarchical practices that serve more to alienate officers from each other than to unite.

Encouragingly, the issue of improving amenities for women police is being given due policy priority. Under the Modernization of State Police Force Scheme, the Government of India issued guidelines in February 2013 to state governments on items to be covered under the scheme. This clearly laid down that police stations constructed under the scheme must include toilet facilities, crèches, and restrooms for women police personnel.¹³⁷ Detailed instructions on amenities for women police were again issued in May 2014 where states were directed to include the following in their action plan for 2014-2015:¹³⁸

- Suitable toilets for women police personnel including separate hand-washing and shower facilities with adequate supply of water at existing police stations, outposts and barracks. Wherever it is not possible to provide access to permanent toilets, portable toilets need to be provided for. These must be installed securely and be provided with lockable doors, lighting and ventilation.
- A restroom at every police station for women personnel. The room needs to be separate from other parts of the workplace and it should be clean, secure, and located in a convenient place close to other facilities such as the toilet. The room should be big enough with proper ventilation to use as a change room also. Facilities may be provided for storing clothes and personal belongings with lockable shelf-storage and coat/shirt hanging place.
- The room and toilet should reasonably be accessible to women police officials so that their security is not compromised.

It is essential that adequate resources are allocated to and spent on implementing these policy directions to address the current dire situation.

Accommodation

While a problem experienced across the board in terms of a lack of accommodation infrastructure (and the necessary associated funds to address this), particularly for officers posted in remote parts of the country, accommodation is of particular importance to women given the safety issues and taboos that already exist around their being away from home. It is a topic that has often been raised at the National Conferences for Women Police, and frequently emerged in the fieldwork for this research.

Indeed, the Parliamentary Committee in its reports identified it as being not just a “contributing factor for low intake of women” but “one of the major impediments faced by women in joining the police”.¹³⁹ In its first report it recommended that an effective housing policy be devised to increase the availability of residential accommodation as well as exploring of the possibility of introducing a separate housing pool for women. It indicated that shortage of funds should not act as a hindrance to addressing these needs. In its follow-up report it expressed dismay that this issue had not been adequately addressed, and concern that data provided by the Ministry further showed very low levels of satisfaction from the police in relation to the provision of accommodation. It was particularly damning in its commentary:

137 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (2013), No. 21011/23/2013-PM-1: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/ImpModPoliceForces_120314.PDF

138 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (2014), Police modernization Division, No. 21011/27/2014-PM-1: http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/PM-I-280514.PDF

139 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p 52.

*“the Committee fail to understand how such a sorry state of affairs can augur well for the increase of women police personnel”.*¹⁴⁰

This was reinforced in the current research, with a number of senior male officers interviewed indicating their hesitation or reluctance to post women because of the lack of facilities, which clearly then has a knock-on impact on their allocation of postings and duties, and in turn job experience and career progression of women police.

Maternity and Childcare Facilities

Central and state governments have different rules on maternity entitlements. For central government employees, which includes IPS officers, maternity leave stands extended to 180 days.¹⁴¹ In addition, women employees of the central government are also offered childcare leave up to two years during their entire service which can be availed of until the child turns 18 years. As such, women IPS officers interviewed for this research did not share any problem regarding maternity and childcare leave.

At the state level, however, there is evident discrepancy between states in relation to maternity and childcare leave policies. Maternity leave varies between 135 days to 180 days across states. On childcare leave, while states like Haryana and more recently Bihar also offer two years of leave to state cadre officers, others like Jharkhand and Rajasthan do not. Women police from these states shared how such policies need to be applied across the board to support women officers and personnel of other ranks. In Haryana, while the two-year policy is in force, in practice women officers face problems in availing of it. They are required to first finish their accumulated earned leave before making use of the two-year childcare leave. This becomes difficult, as police departments often disallow taking earned leave for long periods. This puts women in an awkward position as they are compelled to ask for earned leave repeatedly in order to exhaust it. It is particularly arduous for women who have served for a long period and are likely to have accumulated considerable earned leave.

The need for provision of childcare facilities was also repeatedly raised. In its examination of the provision for childcare, the Parliamentary Committee was critical of the under-spending of allocated funds:

*“For the fiscal year 2012-13, funds to the tune of Rs. 1.22 crore were released for this purpose, whereas, utilization was to the tune of Rs. 59 lakhs only... The Committee express their displeasure not only on the substantial under-utilization of allocated funds but also the inability of the Ministry to provide reliable data relating to availability of crèches/ day care centre facilities at various locations in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). The Committee strongly reiterate the need for child care services...”*¹⁴²

It was particularly critical of the approach and attitude of the Ministry to the matter:

*“The Committee are at a loss to understand as to why the Ministry went into slumber and failed to appreciate the need for establishing the facilities of crèches and day care centres for their women police personnel. The Committee are of the view that the Government was not sincere in implementing their own policies and programmes of providing crèche and day care facilities to their women police personnel. The Committee are disappointed to find that no reliable data has been maintained in regard to availability of crèches/ day care facilities at various locations in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and deplore the lackadaisical approach of the Ministry in this regard”.*¹⁴³

140 Parliament of India (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, p 17.

141 Government of India, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Personnel and Training (2008), Office Memorandum, No.13018/2/2008-Estt.(L): http://www.delhi.gov.in/DoIT/DTC/PDF/6PCR/maternity_leave.pdf.

142 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 50.

143 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 51.

Day care facilities at Rajasthan Police Training Academy

Police departments themselves can take initiatives to provide crèche and day care facilities. In late 2014, the Rajasthan Police Training Academy, located in Jaipur (the state's capital), in collaboration with a local women's group, set up a crèche on its premises for the children of police personnel.¹⁴⁴ This is open to all ranks. The crèche provides children's books and games, an on-call doctor, and a day-long facility from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm, at a nominal fee. This initiative not only provides a needed service to working policewomen, it is also a huge expression of support from the Rajasthan Police to its women police personnel.

Working Hours

The police in India continue to be governed by the "always on duty" principle laid down in the Police Act, 1861.¹⁴⁵ Personnel shortfalls, skewed deployment, and poor management practices contribute to inordinately long and irregular working hours. A recent study sponsored by the BPRD reveals that "90 % of police station staff, across states and across police station types, presently work for more than eight hours a day".¹⁴⁶ The study further reveals that in many instances, police station staff are working for anywhere between 11-14 hours a day without any weekly off.¹⁴⁷ The study also shows that the majority of states do not currently have a shift system in place. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu state police manuals do prescribe different shift systems for urban, semi-urban and rural police stations; however it was found that during periods of work pressure, the system is either given up or suitably modified.¹⁴⁸

As such, long working hours is a serious concern for all police organisations and for all personnel, particularly those at the police station. This research sought to identify its specific impact on women personnel and across the board, the issue of work hours was raised as presenting a significant challenge. Women were often working 12 hours or more (particularly if travel to a posting is required) necessitating long absences from home, making it difficult for them to manage work and home life effectively. The lack of proper and separate facilities for women at police stations reinforce the difficulties of long working hours:

"When we come back from maternity we are given hard posting, long hours – it gets difficult".

"Is difficult to be on duty 24 hours – particularly when there are less facilities available to us".

"It is difficult. No basic facility. Working for such long hours".

"8 hour shift is a dream".

"Biggest problem is time. If there are fixed hours, then no problem".

"Duty hours must be fixed if they want women to be able to work in the police".

144 (2014) "City police crèche is a blessing for working policewomen", *Times of India*, 16 November: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/City-police-crche-is-a-blessing-for-working-policewomen/articleshow/45163681.cms>.

145 Section 22, *Police Act 1861*.

146 Government of India, Bureau of Police Research and Development sponsored study on, *National Requirement of Manpower for 8-Hour Shifts in Police Stations* (2014), p. v: <http://www.bprd.nic.in/writereaddata/linkimages/5122897254-National%20Requirement%20of%20Manpower%20for%208%20Hour%20Shifts%20in%20Police%20Stations.pdf>.

147 Working seven days without a single day off.

148 Government of India, BPRD sponsored study on, *National Requirement of Manpower for 8-Hour Shifts in Police Stations* (2014), p.16.

When asked what three things would make their work more comfortable, fixed shift work was a common refrain and there was almost unanimous agreement on the need for flexible working hours for all police officers.

One underlying problem, however, relates to the impact that such low numbers of female police has on their availability and the necessity to fulfil certain functions. In particular, if there are women help desks, or women police stations which need a minimal number of women personnel available for 24 hours, or other regulations in place in relation to the need for women police to be present or to fulfil certain duties around female victims, then if there are very few or not enough women officers to carry these out, the women police available are required to work long hours. This was highlighted on several occasions:

“Duty hours have been implemented in some police stations but not possible everywhere because of the low numbers”.

“In every thana¹⁴⁹ one woman police has to be there for crimes against women. We do not have enough police officers to decrease the workload”.

It is such glaring lacunae that require these very policies and initiatives to be reviewed for feasibility. One can observe a vicious circle whereby there are insufficient women police; resulting in those present to have to work longer and harder in challenging conditions where basic facilities and policies are not in place. It is clear that resources are an issue overall. Throughout the Parliamentary Committee report for example, it can be seen that there are basic infrastructure issues for which significant investment is required, and a need to examine poor use of funds allocated. Equally, many of these issues – to the extent that they would improve working conditions overall, such as introducing a shift system – would benefit all police regardless of gender thus helping improve morale, which might in turn have a positive knock-on effect on policing overall, as well as on male police attitudes to female police. Other research found that:

*“both male and female officers feel overworked, exhausted by the long hours and lack of sleep, and distracted by family worries and other emotional demands...providing an environment that is satisfactory for both men and women would improve officer morale. If the men are satisfied with their jobs, resentment against female officers might dissipate”.*¹⁵⁰

The BPRD study (cited above) on the need for a shift system for police provides a pioneering solution to the problem of irregular and inordinately long working hours, which in turn, rests on increasing the numbers of women in policing. The study’s primary recommendation is that a shift system (with details and variants prescribed) should be introduced in police stations and a regular weekly day off given to police station staff. To implement this, the endemic shortfall of police personnel must be addressed and numbers increased across the board. The study computed that exactly 337,500 police personnel need to be recruited to enforce shifts in police stations. Pointing to the dire need to increase the representation of women in the police, the study recommends that all new recruitment for this purpose should be of women only:

“Against the requirement of 3,37,500 of additional strength in police stations for introducing shift functioning, all recruitments should be done from among women only. This would take the ratio of women police to a more desirable level of nearly 20%. This step would, thus, serve twin purposes of

¹⁴⁹ Thana is the vernacular word for police station.

¹⁵⁰ Natarajan, M., “Police culture and the integration of women in India”, *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol 16, No 2, p. 136.

introduction of shift system in police stations as well as enhancing women's presence in the police for better policing".¹⁵¹

This is truly an innovative and unprecedented policy measure. If implemented in earnest, it could make way for an inclusion of women police while also serving another equally beneficial purpose towards improved policing.

Deployment and Allocation of Duties

Roles and responsibilities in the police organisation – elaborately laid down in police manuals – are determined by rank with little distinction between men and women officers. Some states however do lay down separate duties for them.

In Jharkhand for instance, women police “*are not to be substituted for male police but they should be employed on duties which they alone could perform more effectively and with greater advantage than male police.*”¹⁵² Women police are only to perform specified tasks which include escorting female prisoners, duties in relation to cases of violence against women and children, *helping men police in any investigation* (emphasis added) involving interrogation or execution of warrant or in any matter concerning women generally, watch duty of female suspects and any *miscellaneous duty according to ability* (emphasis added).¹⁵³ The language clearly reflects a subordinate role being assigned to women police.

In practice, gender stereotyping is widely prevalent across ranks and negatively impacts deployment and allocation of duties to women officers. Overall, it was found that at the IPS level, there are very few women officers heading a district and at the subordinate level, there are very few women Station House Officers (in charge of a police station) in regular police stations. Woman SHOs are based mostly in All-Women Police Stations.

There are a number of contributory factors. First is the issue of discriminatory attitudes towards women's abilities which plays out differently at different ranks. At the police station level, attitudes were frequently encountered - particularly among male officers - such as:

“Men have better mental capacity than women”.

“Women shirk work and do not come on time”.

“Policing does not need more than 10% women”.

Such attitudes then impact the roles being assigned to women. For instance, women constables working in regular police stations (as opposed to women police stations) are often witnessed performing desk jobs like those of computer operator, data entry operator, wireless operator, and maintaining records. In contrast, male constables are rarely given desk jobs. This can lead to a skewed “gendering” of work duties with tasks like computers and record-keeping considered more fit for women. There are also occasions when women constables are exploited by senior officers. For example, a senior woman IPS officer in one of the states pointed out a common practice of male investigating officers getting women constables to write their case diaries¹⁵⁴ because women generally are seen to have “better and neater handwriting”. This is not just about these officers shirking work, but a serious policing concern as investigating officers alone are to maintain the case diary in their own writing. This is a basic norm laid down in police manuals and regulations to safeguard the independence and confidentiality of the investigation.

151 Government of India, Bureau of Police Research and Development (2014), sponsored study on *National Requirement of Manpower for 8-Hour Shifts in Police Stations*, p. 127-128: <http://www.bprd.nic.in/writereaddata/linkimages/5122897254-National%20Requirement%20of%20Manpower%20for%208%20Hour%20Shifts%20in%20Police%20Stations.pdf>.

152 Jharkhand Police, *Jharkhand Police Manual*, Rule 1290, Chapter 44, Women Police, Volume One, p. 630.

153 Jharkhand Police, *Jharkhand Police Manual*, Rule 1290, Chapter 44, Women Police, Volume One, p. 630.

154 The case diary is the day-to-day record of the investigation of a case to be maintained by the Investigating Officer.

In Kerala, which is often held up as a model for its relatively better management practices, not a single one of its 475 police stations had a woman Station House Officer in charge. Women police commonly perceive gender discrimination in decisions around allocation of duties. Comments included:

“In postings we face a lot of discrimination. Field jobs are not assigned to women...Postings should be transparent. I am posted here in HQ for the past six years – in my prime age I am sitting in non-field posting”.

“Lot of discrimination in posting. We are often relegated to less important posts”.

In many cases, women themselves opt for desk jobs partly in order to be able to balance work and family responsibilities. Several male SHOs shared how their women subordinates pressurise them into “soft” tasks. Male officers use this both to justify discriminatory practices while at the same time grudge women personnel for “having it too easy”. Women’s choices need to be understood against several societal constraints including at times inaccessibility of public transport for safe travel, which too, is a deterrent for women opting for field postings. It is only by placing women in responsible positions, as well as in roles with a strong public interface, that will help build their confidence as well as increase their credibility in society.

Second, the challenging conditions of postings, particularly where this may be far from home, also presents difficulties for women since:

*“The need to adjust and cope with the requirement of work at a new place of posting and the changes that have to be made in lifestyle can be quite harrowing for a woman police personnel if the place of transfer poses hardships in balancing their professional and domestic spheres”.*¹⁵⁵

A number of examples were cited:

“The Haryana police department has a rule where no police personnel - from constable to inspector – is posted in their home district. Even if you do end up in your home district by chance, through pulls and pressures, one is likely to get shifted out in the regular transfer cycle every three to four years. Don’t understand why for us. In home district, my family is here, if night duty, then I can come home easily. If in another district like X then I can’t come home easily, will not be able to balance work and family responsibilities well. I can work late in evenings if I am posted in home district. If outside district, then will want to leave early. This is particularly needed for women, because they have responsibility for family also. They need this support because they have to balance both and will be able to perform better”.

“I was recently transferred to X district. I faced many problems. I was transferred to X because there was no vacancy in SI position in my district of Y, so was shifted to a place which had vacancy. I had to tell my domestic help to cook for children, one day my child called up to say she hasn’t come. Made me feel very bad – what is the point of my service if I am not able to provide food to my children. Then I feel the service is being unfair to us. Women should be posted in their home district only, and then they will work very well”.

155 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p.22.

Kerala has issued special norms for the transfer and posting of women at the subordinate ranks, namely Women Circle Inspectors (WCI) and Women Sub-Inspectors (WSI), in order to ensure greater equality in the allocation of postings. Given the limited posts for women at the CI and SI levels in districts, a woman officer posted in these ranks typically remained in her post until retirement, thereby depriving juniors a chance to work in that district. Therefore, the norms were laid down under which a WCI/WSI is to remain in a district for up to three years, after which she will be liable for transfer in case a junior desires to work in that district. Personal preferences are still accommodated. Every women head constable can indicate four options for district of posting when she is promoted to the post of WCI/WSI.¹⁵⁶

Added to this, the lack of available facilities for women in many of the postings not only creates more difficulties for them if they are sent, but also deters senior officers from sending them there in the first place.

The Parliamentary Committee found that the, “*rigid transfer and posting policy of police personnel is one of the factors for low induction of women in police force*”.¹⁵⁷ In the IPS ranks, female officers experience the starkest discrimination in postings and transfers. In general, this process is highly politicised and affects male officers too, but here we point to the distinct impact on women officers. In Rajasthan, one female officer shared how women officers lose out because they do not network with politicians, and/or participate in evening social events where political connections are forged. Similarly, in Jharkhand, while talking about discrimination in postings, a female officer described the level of lobbying male officers do within the department, and that it was an area women officers struggle with, partly due to their own inhibitions but also because of the negativity surrounding it. This indicates bias at different levels – ambition in female officers runs the risk of very quickly being perceived negatively and as such is discouraged within the department, whereas there is a higher threshold of tolerance when it comes to such behaviour among men. This suggests that despite equality in rank, women officers are expected to behave in a certain way.

Finally the isolation of female police in women-only posts, or in all-women police stations (where they are needed) greatly reduces their availability for and therefore deployment to mainstream policing tasks. This is conceded by the Ministry of Home Affairs in its evidence to the Parliamentary Committee:

*“Legally there is no distinction between the duties of a police woman and a police man. In practice, however the police women are frequently used for certain “specialised” or select tasks for which they are considered to be more suited by nature than man”.*¹⁵⁸

It led the Committee to conclude that:

*“The Committee now strongly feel that there is an urgent need to mainstream the women police personnel by assigning all types of policing jobs to them and by putting them at par with the male counterparts”.*¹⁵⁹

As repeatedly stated, the lack of opportunities, training and experience across a variety of duties and postings has a negative knock-on effect on promotion of women into more mainstream and senior positions.

At a larger level, there is a need to interrogate embedded assumptions about police work, and what each gender is fit to do. Advocates of equality, including experienced police officers, often point out that a deconstruction

156 Kerala Police (2010), *Executive Directive, 07/2010 – Transfer and Posting of WCIs/WSIs – norms prescribed*.
http://www.keralapolice.org/newsite/pdfs/exe_directive/2010/ed_07_10.pdf.

157 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of Fifteenth Lok Sabha, September 2013, p. 22.

158 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 25.

159 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 54.

of police work in fact apportions only a very small share of overall functions to needing “muscle” power, seen as the domain of men. Dispelling crowds, handling protests, chasing down violent suspects, or use of force in select situations are certainly common but not constant. Even for these, the world over, women are used and not excluded. Much more policing time and personnel are used at headquarters, and in the field in management, evidence gathering, court proceedings, record keeping, handling complainants, smoothly running police stations, and building relationships with the community; and all of these are areas of talent particularly valued in women. It is high time that there are open conversations and policy-level interventions within police departments to redefine what is “core” policing work, and how women can uniquely and equally contribute based on capability and merit.

Training and Support

Like recruitment, police training in India takes place both at state and union levels. At the state level, states have established training schools for newly recruited constables and training colleges or academies for directly recruited Sub-Inspectors and Deputy Superintendents of Police. Training in these institutions consists of four types of courses: basic induction level courses, pre-promotion in-service courses, refresher courses and specialised courses.¹⁶⁰ IPS officers go through training at the National Police Academy, following a foundational training course together with other officers of the All India Services.

In all training institutions, men and women go through the same courses including physical training. As such, the research did not point to any significant discrimination against women recruits within the training institutions. Women across the five states felt they were treated at par with their male colleagues during induction training. Many, however, pointed to several practical difficulties they face during training. In Rajasthan, for example, there are no women’s changing rooms on the grounds. As a result, to change into their physical training uniform, men could change on the grounds itself while women had to go back to their rooms for which they were often taunted for taking a long time. Another common problem for women was difficulties in performing physical exercises during menstruation. Much here depends on individual instructors and their sensitivity and accessibility. In Rajasthan, the instructor would allow two days off from physical exercises to women during their cycle. Some women shared that training should also include education and awareness of the effects of physical activity and exertion during periods, to help women better prepare for the challenges of policing.

While training standards are the same, women particularly at the senior subordinate ranks felt more could be done to build confidence and morale of female recruits during training. A women officer in Rajasthan shared how, on joining the force, women at the subordinate ranks find themselves handling responsibilities they are very unfamiliar with, like leading a team, giving clear instructions to juniors, and supervising in general. It often happens that women are not able to assert themselves and end up getting side-lined. Training should look at ways of pushing women to speak up and encourage them to take the lead, for example, so that they get used to giving clear and loud instructions.

Other than induction training, the research points to general dissatisfaction among women personnel regarding refresher and specialised training opportunities, evidencing a contrast between experiences on the ground, and the conclusion of the Parliamentary Committee report that “*women police are imparted with the requisite training at par with their male counterparts*”.¹⁶¹

Comments in the current research included that:

160 For an overview of police training, see Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, *Police Organisation in India*, New Delhi, India: http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/police/police_organisations.pdf. This is currently being updated.

161 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 54.

“Adequate training is essential for law and procedure. The police personnel is not aware of new laws and amendments so frequent training is essential”.

“Regular training for women is important to upgrade their skills: training for women is very less than men. Whenever they get promotions, there should be training. To keep them updated about legal developments”.

“We want more training – got it at the time of joining but refresher courses are very short. So many amendments are coming but we don’t know”.

“The training is not enough. Not told changes in the Code of Criminal Procedure. Training is on broad themes. Not much in detail”.

“Women should be given good training, not just physical but even mentally, prepare them as officer. Address the attitude of always seeking leniency. Have to prepare that it’s a hard job. They are not given officer rank training”.

“Would want far more training in investigation”.

“Very adhoc. They have received induction training but no refresher training”.

When training opportunities are made available, women are often confronted with practical difficulties. For instance, in Haryana, women subordinate ranks are nominated to undergo Rapid Action Force¹⁶² training for one year. The training takes place at two-three scheduled places, including the Haryana Police Academy. Nominees are required to relocate to the training venue for a year. Women Sub-Inspectors shared how this creates problems for them in terms of managing family. They are forced to make alternative care arrangements at home which creates tensions within the family. Despite these constraints, they expressed interest in receiving training and suggested that these should be organised at the district or preferably range level, so they are able to participate without having to leave their families.

The link between adequate training for allocation of duties is self-evident, and its lack was frequently identified:

“We need proper training for operations. The basic training is not enough”.

“Women do not have the calibre to carry out proper investigations. They need to be given proper training”.

The perception that women are not equipped to conduct proper investigation is not to be taken lightly, and really speaks to the endemic problem of shoddy investigation by the police which is repeatedly brought up in Supreme Court judgements and in case after case. With reference to women specifically, it must be seen whether this is an issue of lack of training, the denial of exposure, or specific disadvantage at the level of training, or all of these. Without the added experience that solid investigative experience brings, women police’s opportunities for career progression and promotion are then also negatively affected.

Retention and Promotion

Without any statistics or data collection, it is impossible to know for sure whether retention is an issue; however a number of women police ventured the opinion that the working conditions are such that the pressures in trying

¹⁶² Haryana Police constituted an All-Women Rapid Action Force in 2013 as part of the measures for enhancing safety of women. Women cadres are selected from across the state to undergo RAF training at the Haryana Police Academy. See (2013) “*Young brigade takes charge of women’s safety in Gurgaon*,” (2013), *Hindustan Times*, 10 December 2013: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/gurgaon/young-brigade-takes-charge-of-women-s-safety-in-gurgaon/article1-1160952.aspx>.

to balance work and home life in particular cause many women to leave. This needs to be investigated and monitored.

With regard to promotion in the police department, there are several problems which adversely affect women police. First, promotions within the department are mired in problems. Annual Performance Appraisal Reports and seniority rolls, on the basis of which promotions at the subordinate ranks are based, are not completed on time. Long delays have stunted promotion opportunities for many officers, both men and women. It is very common to hear of personnel at Head Constable or Sub-Inspector ranks serving in the same position for over 20 years. Concerns over lack of objectivity and uniformity in the appraisal system and promotions were raised way back in 1981 by the National Police Commission which highlighted discrepancies in record management, and the scope for prejudices and bias in filling the evaluation forms.¹⁶³ The Commission strongly advocated for a change in order to make the system merit-based and professional; however, these recommendations have largely remained unheeded by most states.

For women police, the problem is further compounded because of the separate cadre system for men and women at the subordinate ranks. Only a select number of posts at the Head Constable, Sub-Inspector and Inspector ranks are assigned to women police. As a result, there are fewer opportunities for promotion. A male constable can typically rise up to the rank of Sub-Inspector in the span of his career, but with few posts assigned for women at both Head Constable and SI rank, very few women Constables can get promoted. A look at the figures of women across ranks shows that most women are concentrated in the lower ranks. The number of women in senior positions in the police in India paints a sorry picture:¹⁶⁴

Table 6: Rank-wise Percentage of Women Police against Male Police

Rank	Number	As Percentage of Male Equivalents
DGP/Spl/DG/ADGP	16	4%
IGP	44	7.8%
DIG	20	3.2%
AIGP/SSP/SP/COM	190	6.7%
ADDL SP/Dy. COM	162	6.9%
ASP/Dy. SP/Asst. COM	496	4%
INSP	1,234	3.8%
SI	5,668	4.4%
ASI	3,553	2.8%
Head Constable	8,246	2.3%
Constable	85,696	5.2%
TOTAL	1,05,325	

As in other contexts, women are concentrated in the constable and head constable positions. Out of a total 396 DGP/Spl/DG/ADGP posts, a mere 16 are women; only 20 out of 607 DIGs; and 1,234 out of 31,754 Inspectors. Percentages of women represented in higher ranks are slightly higher only because the total numbers of all personnel at those ranks are lower. It must be emphasised that these figures – which clearly show the ranks and levels at which the problems are worst and thus concerted effort is needed – are regularly collected and collated by the Bureau of Police Research and Development and as such are readily available to inform policy for those who are in a position or have the duty to act.

¹⁶³ National Police Commission (1981), Government of India, Sixth Report, pp.83-90.

¹⁶⁴ Bureau of Police Research and Development (2014), Data on Police Organizations in India, p. 141 and p. 43. Percentage has been calculated based on total number of women police across ranks (p. 141) and actual strength of total police across ranks (p. 43): <http://www.bprd.nic.in/showfile.asp?lid=1291>.

This problem was also identified by the Ministry in its evidence to the Parliamentary Committee:

“Many state forces have different cadres for women and men. For instance, in a state police force, women inspectors may have only 20 posts in the next scale of promotion but the State might have, for men, many posts. As a result, women can only take that much promotion. So, we have checked out that women slow down in promotion; that is why they do not reach the senior ranks”.

This led to the Committee concluding that:

“Promotion prospects of women police personnel get retarded in comparison to their male counterparts”.

And recommending that:¹⁶⁵

“The Government should take up the issue of discrimination of women police personnel vis-à-vis their male counterparts in promotion”.

Ironically, while the cadre system affects opportunities for women, it also leads to a sense of frustration among the men. In the course of our research, we found that in order to increase women’s representation in the subordinate ranks, there have been quick promotions for female officers. This has led to a grouse among the male officers who have more years of service but are now placed in the same rank, with the same salary, as the women officers. A distinct prejudice against women for being promoted this way was encountered, given the predominant mind-set that they do not work hard enough and are undeserving of positions of authority.

There are also other specific factors and inconsistencies that contribute, for example:

“Promotions are based on vacancies but no standard policy is followed in determining vacancies. Every range follows its own rule. According to the rule, a Constable becomes eligible for promotion to B-1 grade after five years in service. Vacancies are determined in every range but there is no standard criteria”.

“In one range, out of 20 seats, there may be only two women seats so only that many can get promoted. As a result, of the officers who would have undergone Head Constable training together, some are serving as Sub-inspectors whereas some are still at the Head Constable rank”.

“Policies are changed arbitrarily. When X was the Head Constable, there was a policy that an HC cannot be promoted to ASI until three years as HC. For a new batch, the rule was relaxed randomly and within six months, a Head Constable got promoted to ASI. But then, the rule went back to the old policy of three years. In such cases, officers don’t even have the option of appealing”.

Overall, many examples were encountered of women being confined to the same rank for years on end (very much a problem for the men too) such as:

“X has been a SI for 24 years. Promotions among the subordinate ranks is the biggest problem”.

“Lack of promotion opportunities is a huge problem. Officers remain Sub-Inspector for up to 25 years, where will the motivation to do good work come from? Timely promotion is key to job satisfaction...”

“I want to become an SI but not getting – promotion is very hard. I will retire as Head Constable only”.

165 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-first Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, Recommendation Sl. No. 7, Para No. 2.7.

As with the allocation of postings and duties, a sense also emerged of levels of corruption and lack of transparency in promotion generally, but which has a particular effect on women since they are less likely to be networked into or connected with the powerful men who make the decisions.

All of the factors highlighted already contribute to the failure of the advancement of women in the police. Insufficient numbers, inadequate representation, problematic attitudes and discrimination, lack of ongoing training, unavailability of appropriate policies and facilities, lack of career experience through deployment and postings, all have the effect of preventing women from moving ahead. Thus committing to addressing the problem of enhancing promotion of women alone through perhaps quotas will have only some, or a limited impact, unless there is honest and open recognition of the extent that gender bias fuels disadvantage to women and lack of priority accorded to their promotional avenues as compared to their male colleagues.

Policy change is urgently needed, and it is hoped states will take the cue from what is laid down in the BPRD's Model Police Manual: *"There shall be common seniority and promotion panels of all ranks for all police officers irrespective of sex. There shall be no separate list for men or women"*.¹⁶⁶ This should be the first step that police departments take, while working towards ensuring transparent and merit-based promotions for all police personnel.

The ultimate aim of having women in leadership positions cannot be overstated, as illustrated by research in Tamil Nadu:

"It is essential for governments to ensure that more women are appointed as police managers. The group interviews in the battalions indicated that many women saw this single step as a solution to many of the problems they encounter in the police".

All-Women Police Stations

As mentioned, some states have actively implemented the policy of All-Women Police Stations (AWPS) which are established alongside regular police stations in a particular area. At present, Tamil Nadu leads with 199 women police stations, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 71, and Bihar and Rajasthan both with 40. Recognising the deep gender bias in society, the idea behind AWPS is to encourage reporting and where possible investigation of crimes against women such as dowry harassment, domestic violence, rape and other sexual offences in an environment perceived as free of male bias. There is, however, considerable difference of opinion among states on the feasibility of AWPS. In evidence to the Parliamentary Committee a representative from Odisha Police stated:

"We have encountered a lot of problems which are being faced by women officers being posted at women police stations. Most of the cases which come to these police stations are related to dowry, torture, and rape; where mostly these lady officers have to travel, in a single case, to two-three locations all over India, which is very difficult for them on their own. We also have a Mahila Shishu (women and child) Desk in each and every police station. My suggestion is that instead of having exclusively Mahila Police Stations it will be better if we strengthen all the police stations to be gender sensitive and strengthening them by posting adequate women officers and staff at that police station".¹⁶⁷

States like Kerala and Delhi have set up separate women's cells or units, staffed by women police officers both at the state and district level to deal with grievances of women including matrimonial disputes, cruelty and dowry

¹⁶⁶ Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, *Model Police Manual, Volume I*, Section 400, p. 288: <http://bprd.nic.in/writereaddata/linkimages/1645442204-Volume%201.pdf>.

¹⁶⁷ Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, p. 41.

harassment, as well as women’s helpdesks in police stations.¹⁶⁸ With AWPS, access is an issue since they are mostly set up at the district headquarters, making it difficult for women complainants to reach them in order to lodge a complaint. Other problems regarding AWPS have also been highlighted, such as, a sense of fatigue that may develop among women officers constantly dealing with a particular category of cases, and consequent dissatisfaction among complainants. The Ministry of Home Affairs is intending to carry out an audit of AWPS in order to thoroughly review their strengths and weaknesses. The Parliamentary Committee overall seemed not to favour them (although it did not follow up on the matter in its second report):

*“The Committee find that the intention of establishing AWPSs lies in the fact that various issues like domestic violence, dowry harassment and girl child abuse could be eloquently tackled by women police personnel...While deliberating on this issue by taking into consideration the divergent views on the aspect of establishing AWPSs vis-à-vis deployment of more women police personnel in each police station, the Committee feel that if adequate number of women police personnel are deployed in each police station and the complaints of crimes against women are dealt with in an effective and efficient manner, there would be little justification for establishing AWPSs”.*¹⁶⁹

The ground reality is that due to the shortage of women investigating officers, once the all-women police station registers the complaint, it is forwarded for investigation to the general police station with jurisdiction. This means that a woman complainant is made to travel to the all-women police station to register her complaint, but ultimately the investigation, which is the main police work, is not done there. Of the states covered in this research, Meghalaya is the only exception to this. There, cases related to crimes against women including rape, molestation, eve teasing, murder for dowry and so on are first registered in the local police station having jurisdiction in the place of occurrence, and after taking all preliminary steps, cases are transferred to the woman police station for investigation and prosecution.¹⁷⁰ A women’s police station has been set up in each district headquarters. Despite the mandate, however, Meghalaya’s all-women police stations suffer from shortage of staff. In Shillong, the WPS does not have any sanctioned strength for Inspector rank while there is a huge shortage in other ranks:¹⁷¹

Table 7: Police personnel in Shillong’s all-women police station

Rank	Sanctioned Strength	Actual Strength
Inspector	-	-
Sub-Inspector	6	4
Head Constable	2	1
Constable	15	4

Already stretched resources are spent in building separate women’s police stations which have a limited purpose and a negative impact on both female victims (in terms of inadequacy of service) and the female police officers (in terms of lack of experience). Within India, many women police officers question the concept of all-woman police stations on the grounds that it isolates them even further, and does not help to develop their policing skills

168 In Delhi, a Special Police Unit for Women and Children is functioning at Nanakpura area and is responsible for investigating complaints of crime against women and children. In addition, Crime against Women and Children Cells operate in every district under the supervision of the district DCPs whereas Women and Child help desks are established at the police station level under the supervision of the Station House Officer (SHO) concerned. For more details, see Standing Order No. 281, Special Police Unit for Women and Children, Delhi Police: <http://spuwac.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/281-pdf.pdf>. Similarly, in Kerala, a State Women’s Cell is functioning at Thiruvananthapuram under a lady Superintendent of Police whereas a District Women Cell has been set up in all police districts headed by a Woman Circle Inspector. For more details, see the website of the Women Cell, Kerala Police: http://keralapolice.org/newsite/women_cell.html.

169 Parliament of India (2013), Twenty-First Report of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, Recommendation Sl. No. 11, Para No. 2.11.

170 Government of Meghalaya, Home (Police) Department (2009), *Notification No. HPL. 176/200827, on Creation of Woman Police Stations*: http://megpolice.gov.in/notification/Woman_PS.PDF.

171 Interview with staff at the Women Police Station, Shillong, East Khasi Hills district.

holistically. In fact, our own research threw up strong evidence that this was the dominant view among women police, who were largely critical of all-women police stations, preferring instead to have women in every police station:

“Better to have women in every thana because in many cases you do need male colleagues”.

“Every thana should have a women and child desk”.

“Having women in every police station is better than women police stations”.

“Personally against these. Once you are treating women equal to men, should not have women police stations. Even a young lady should say she feels comfortable in any police station – that is the kind of atmosphere I welcome”.

“Some of the so-called policy measures are counterproductive... they help to perpetuate prejudice that women are weak and need to be protected. Like the Code of Criminal Procedure says women should not be called to police station, all these things should go. We are making laws and procedures with the effect that women should be kept away from police – don’t think these measures are in the interest of women. Even our lady officers do not realise this. They often stand up for such measures”.

“Separate women police station is not necessary...Women police should be attached to all police stations”.

“The presumption of assigning duties based on gender should not be there. Right now to increase women, this is a good idea. Because change in attitude will take a long time. But important to give them all powers of investigation of all crimes registered in the station”.

“All-women police stations – there is no point in having this because they don’t have power to investigate any case, only register case. Departments prejudice”.

“Even in women’s police stations there are more men police. Everyone is dissatisfied with women police stations. The rate of disposal of cases is not very high”.

“Women’s helpdesks are preferable. Difficult for women to come to thana in all-women police stations from different remote areas”.

“It is better to increase women police officers than to increase women police stations. What is the use of women’s police stations without an adequate number of women police”?

There are obvious benefits in women’s police stations in terms of providing a safe environment for female victims or complainants, but their cost benefit and feasibility must be determined against women’s helpdesks in police stations, particularly in light of the number of women police and resources required. In addition, while the findings of the MHA’s performance audit of all-women police stations are awaited, there must be a broader examination of whether these are actually empowering policewomen, or mere tokenism built into policy. It stands to reason that where women’s police stations do not have adequate powers or resources to effectively conduct investigations, women officers posted there are not gaining adequate exposure to, or experience of the gamut of police work, and are being siloed into posts that will have an overall negative impact on their opportunities for career progression. These are severely negative consequences for women in policing as a whole.

SECTION 4

Conclusion and Recommendations

As in other countries of the region, policing in India is in urgent need of reform overall. For, as long as a 150-year-old law, that is based on a seriously outdated notion of colonial, control-based policing remains as the framework, reform of any kind will be like swimming upstream. Under this framework myriad additional problems intermingle. Poor policies and practices, a lack of oversight, inadequate resourcing and infrastructure are just a few, and all cause deep-rooted problems among which addressing the under-representation and conditions of women police officers in some ways becomes like a drop in the ocean.

Nonetheless, there is an urgent need to devote specific attention to the plight of women in the police. The severe under-representation is not disputed; there is recognition from the Centre in particular of this, advisories on the matter have been issued, and many state governments have followed suit by announcing reservations for women.

The first problem that arises is with attitudes and culture: there are deeply engrained stereotypes of women as unsuited to policing and resultant discrimination that manifest themselves in a failure to genuinely appreciate the contribution that women can make, or to mainstream them effectively through the organisation. Many women therefore end up being confined to the same ranks or positions for years. They are left feeling that they have to work twice as hard to prove themselves and not complain. This does not make for a congenial working environment for women and has negative consequences for police departments as a whole.

The discrimination that manifests in departmental policies and practices which disadvantage women must be recognised and addressed urgently. There is a pressing need to eradicate separate cadres for men and women at recruitment and promotion, wherever they exist, and institute common cadres. Added to this is the lack of facilities and policies that are necessary to ensure a dignified and respectful workplace for women: from basic amenities such as toilets and restrooms, to policies such as a shift system, or postings which enable them to more easily balance work and family responsibilities. The lack of these facilities and policies contribute to a shared perception among women police that police departments do not sufficiently accommodate women's particular needs. The fact that women do not get sufficiently broad policing experience which is in turn impacting on their inability to progress into higher positions has a knock on effect as women leaders are needed in the police to inspire other women, break stereotypes and challenge male culture.

Hence the need for a holistic view and approach to the problems is clear. Instead, lip service is quite evident with lots of talk but very little action. One example of this is the approach to the recommendations of the National Conference on Women Police – an initiative which should be positive and empowering but which is at risk of becoming redundant. These conferences – while an extremely important forum for female police officers to come together to share common experiences, identify problems and propose solutions from their own perspective – risk being talking shops only, and further undermining the important contribution to be made by female police.

The recent scrutiny by the Parliamentary Committee brings a welcome level of attention to the issues; likewise it brings into sharp relief the gaps in implementation. Increased scrutiny is required at the state level, and in particular the Ministry needs to be more proactive or responsive in relation to establishing mechanisms which could help to ensure that states comply with advisories. The linking of resources to performance under such

targets (dismissed by the Ministry as “not feasible” with little explanation)¹⁷² would seem to be one obvious method by which accountability could be ensured.

With the renewed focus on the safety and security of women in India post-December 2012, which has in turn brought increased scrutiny to the role and importance of women police, the time is ripe to address with gusto gender equality in the police. Small improvements can be already seen in the figures regarding representation; however there is much to be done to ensure that those women who do join up, as well as those who have been struggling in the police force, receive the respect, equality and opportunities in the workplace that they deserve as women and as providers of a key public service.

Recommendations

For Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India

1. Reconceptualise the role of women police:
 - Broaden the role of women police beyond dealing with crimes against women
 - Rethink the segregation of women police into specific “women-only” tasks and consider ways of bringing them into mainstream functions.
2. Women Police in the Union Territories:
 - Enforce the advisory to increase representation of women police to 33 per cent in the Union Territories (UTs)
 - Review overall vacancies in the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Mizoram (AGMU) cadre created separately for the UTs at the IPS level and make recruitments only from women to meet the requirement
 - Review guidelines for transfer and posting of IPS officers to encourage more women to join.
3. Make the National Conference for Women in Police more effective:
 - Hold it more regularly, preferably every year instead of biennial, allow more women to participate, learn and contribute, and ensure closer monitoring of conference recommendations
 - Develop a procedure for Action-Taken Reports (ATR) including developing a template; prescribing a timeline for submission; and setting up a mechanism such as a dedicated Committee (preferably within BPRD) that organises the conferences, for reviewing progress, coordinating follow-up action and determining action in case of slow progress
 - Create a separate webpage for the National Conference on BPRD website with up-to-date information on all previous national conferences, state-wise status of ATRs, copies of ATRs submitted and details of the upcoming conference including selected themes, presentations, and contact details of the convenors.
4. Appoint a nodal officer to monitor implementation of advisories on women police responsible for:
 - Setting up a process to coordinate with state governments on steps taken to achieve 33% reservation
 - Review factors for delays in action taken
 - Recommend suitable measures for the way forward.
5. Include Women Police as a regular theme in the annual DGPs conference.
6. Develop a model gender policy for police departments to:
 - Guide the process of improving gender ratios in the police
 - Clearly emphasise gender equality as a core value of the police

¹⁷² Parliament of India (2014), Second Report of the Sixteenth Lok Sabha, p. 12

- Lay down the guiding principles towards gender mainstreaming including strategies to achieve institutionalisation of gender equality within the police force, policy targets with set timelines and stipulated institutional roles and responsibilities.

The process to draft the model gender policy should begin by:

- The set-up of a committee, preferably headed by a senior woman officer, responsible for preparing a draft, the committee should reflect a balance between police practitioners and subject experts drawn from civil society and independent experts
- Conducting a national-level situation analysis to identify gender issues and disparities in the police force including review of police laws, regulations, recruitment, training, transfer policy, promotion policies, organisational sub-culture, police station facilities and environment, and policing practices overall
- Consulting women personnel across states and across ranks, through focus group discussions and consultation meetings, to understand operational difficulties and discrimination faced by them which will in turn help to draft specific policy provisions.

For Parliament

1. Monitor action being taken by the Union and state governments on recommendations put forward by the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women on the issue of working conditions of women police.

For the National Commission for Women

1. Review status of women police in India, including:
 - Identifying factors impeding women joining the police and suggesting ways to increase representation.
2. Participate in the planning process on women police by:
 - Participating and/or associating with the National Conference on Women Police
 - Getting involved with the BPRD's Seventh Micro-Mission on Gender Crimes and Gender Related Issues which also looks at the issue of women police.

For State Home Departments

1. Reform existing police acts and regulations to strengthen gender equality in policing by incorporating gender-neutral language, ensuring women police officers are entrusted with the same duties and powers as other police officers, clearly specifying functions which women police officers are exclusively entrusted with (as required under Indian criminal law), and reviewing service conditions to accommodate the specific needs of women.
2. Adopt a policy to achieve 33 per cent representation of women in police in tune with the Union government advisories with a detailed recruitment plan in tandem. Only select states currently have reservation of 30% or more for women in the police force.

For Police Departments

1. Cultivate a gender-sensitive organisational culture:
 - Adopt a zero tolerance policy on gender discrimination within the department
 - Develop standard operating procedures on workplace norms including on behaviour, language, and practices of men and women police officers.
2. Recruitment of women in police:

- Introduce a system of common cadre (wherever non-existent) for each entry point at the state level to increase the number of posts available for women personnel; initially, a reservation quota across ranks may be considered
 - Take active measures to target recruitment of women such as media/online advertising, advertisements in local papers, application support and financial resources
 - Ensure geographical, class, caste, religion and ethnic diversity while increasing women's representations to avoid predominance of any single group
 - Conduct an assessment of police strength requirements at police stations and consider making all recruitment from among women only, as per the recommendation of the 2014 BPRD study
 - Consider a policy of having at least one woman in all recruitment boards to promote gender-sensitive selection
 - Hold informational sessions in schools and colleges on policing functions, career opportunities and recruitment processes to encourage more women to apply for jobs in the police.
3. Ensure the presence of three Sub-Inspectors and ten Constables in all police stations as laid down by the Ministry of Home Affairs in its advisory.¹⁷³
 4. Improved and regular in-career training opportunities:
 - Induction training needs to be made more purposeful, with greater focus on behavioural aspects geared towards boosting confidence and stress management, so that women personnel are better able to stand up to the male sub-culture within police departments and patriarchal attitudes in society overall
 - Training schools, colleges and academies must provide separate changing rooms and toilets for women
 - Organise regular specialised courses to ensure that women personnel are up-to-date with legal developments pertaining to crimes against women
 - As far as possible, trainings should be arranged at the district and/or range level so that participation does not increase difficulties for women in terms of managing family life
 - Increase representation of women in training institutions.
 5. Implement family-friendly policies:
 - Shift system in police stations, including a weekly off for all personnel
 - Supportive maternity, paternity and childcare leave policies, including in the case of adopted children, which are consistent with Government of India policies
 - Options of lighter duties and assignments for a stipulated time for women joining back from maternity leave
 - Crèche and day care facilities in all administrative units including police stations, district police headquarters and state police headquarters, as per the Modernisation of Police Force guidelines issued by the Government of India.
 6. Improve working conditions for women personnel:
 - Separate toilet facilities in all administrative units, and separate rest rooms in all police stations, in line with the MPF guidelines
 - Adequate transport facilities for all personnel, and in particular women to reduce the problems faced by women while using public transport
 - Allow civilian spouses of female police officers to stay in the barracks.
 7. Eradicate gender bias in assigning tasks and responsibilities:

¹⁷³ Government of India (2013), Ministry of Home Affairs, D.O. No. 15011/21/2013 – SC/ST – W

- Provide equal opportunities to women, to head police stations and district units, without bias to gender
 - Provide equal opportunities to women for all police work based solely on capability and merit
 - Ensure that desk work such as records management, computer work, maintaining registers, RTI cell and others is allocated evenly among men and women, and not disproportionately given to women personnel.
8. Enhance the visibility of women by increasing the number of women police personnel in police patrols/PCR vans, beat duties, traffic duties and other public interface duties involving interaction with the general public, and not just women and children. This allocation should be aligned with greater recruitment of women with specific planning and deployment to place them in such frontline duties.
 9. Ensure non-discriminatory promotion procedures including:
 - Common seniority lists for men and women
 - Specialised trainings such as on crimes against women should be linked to promotion opportunities
 - Affirmative action such as a prioritised review of women who are currently in positions for long periods of time to identify opportunities for their promotion
 - In evaluating performance, ensure that merit overrides all other factors, including the kinds of tasks done. Ensure that availing flexible working hours during pregnancy and on rejoining after maternity leave, as recommended, is not held negatively against women personnel.
 10. Implement in earnest and with full compliance the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
 11. Establish a separate women police association and/or network at the state level:
 - Develop a policy laying down the framework, mandate, rules of procedure for- the women police association
 - Allocate resources for the efficient functioning of the association.

MALDIVES



SECTION 1

Overview of Police Organisation

Background and context

Maldives is the smallest nation in South Asia but its geographic spread over roughly 90,000 square kilometres (35,000 sq mi), of 1,192 islands (of which 192 are inhabited) poses very different issues for policing compared to other places. The history of modern policing in Maldives is relatively new. It has been through, and in many ways is still undergoing, a recent process of reform. It also has a different history in relation to colonial legacy from the other countries which means that its policing system was never based on the 1861 Police Act model. Given its modernity, it had more opportunities to address the issue of women in policing. As will be seen, however, many challenges still exist.

A police force in Maldives was first established by law in 1933. It was subsequently disbanded and was re-established only in 1972 as part of the National Security Service (NSS). Unlike other nations in the Commonwealth, the Maldives did not bring in separate police legislation even after it achieved independence in 1965. In the absence of such legislation, the police derived their powers of arrest from a general enactment adopted by Parliament.¹⁷⁴ It continued to function as part of the NSS until 2004. In September 2004, the Maldives Police Service (MPS) was created as a civilian law enforcing body under the Ministry of Home Affairs, while the NSS (renamed the National Defence Force in April 2006) remained under the Ministry of Defence.

Maldives Police Service, therefore, is still a fledgling institution. The service is headed by a Commissioner of Police who is directly appointed by the President and is accountable to the Minister-in-charge with regard to the performance and function of the police service.¹⁷⁵ The hierarchical structure of the police is as follows:

- Commissioner of Police
- Deputy Commissioner of Police
- Assistant Commissioner of Police
- Chief Superintendent of Police
- Superintendent of Police
- Chief Inspector
- Inspector of Police
- Sub-Inspector of Police
- Chief Station Inspector
- Police Station Inspector
- Police Staff Sergeant
- Police Sergeant
- Corporal
- Lance Corporal
- Constable (no insignia)

Administratively, Maldives is divided into seven geographical divisions (upper south, south, south central, central, north central, north and upper north) which are organised into 20 atolls in addition to the Malé City Police.¹⁷⁶ There are a total of 77 police stations in the country spread across the atolls and Malé city.

¹⁷⁴ For more information, see Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2010), *Feudal Forces: Reform Derailed*, Chapter 4: Maldives, p.59: http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/police/feudal_forces_reform_delayed_2010.pdf.

¹⁷⁵ Section 52, *Maldives Police Act, 2008*.

¹⁷⁶ Maldives Police Service: <http://www.police.gov.mv/>.



Currently, the total police strength is 3,683 (including civil officers)¹⁷⁷ for a population of around 341,000,¹⁷⁸ thus leaving approximately one police officer per 100 people, well within the UN recommendation of 1:500. However, the geographical issue of policing numerous islands needs to be factored into these figures.

As a civilian institution, the MPS was envisioned as a body committed to the rule of law with the core objective of preventing crime and ensuring peace and order. At first, little change was visible in the policing culture on the ground. This can partly be attributed to the absence of necessary legislation guiding police powers and responsibilities. Consequently, it was not until the Police Act, 2008 was enacted, followed closely by the ratification of the revised Constitution in August 2008, that a legal framework was provided to carry forward police reforms in true earnest. Being a modern legislation, the Act includes progressive features such as the establishment of an independent Police Integrity Commission as an external oversight body mandated to investigate public complaints against the police.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, it falls short on many other counts. It does not, for instance, provide any detail on how the service should be structured, roles and responsibilities of different units and ranks, or commitment to democratic principles, such as ensuring a representative organisation, needed for ensuring effective policing. It does not, for instance, make any mention of reflecting gender diversity in its organisation, as is explained in subsequent sections.

The Numbers and Representation of Women in Policing

Historically, the NSS had few women. It was not until 1988 that women were recruited into the NSS, and even then, they were assigned mostly desk and clerical work rather than active duty. At the time of separation from the NSS, there were fewer than 50 women police officers, and so it was with the creation of the Maldives Police Service – which required a larger police force – that recruitment of women was given an impetus. Unlike India and Pakistan, women are recruited and deployed right across the police and police stations, and thus there are no women-only police stations.

¹⁷⁷ This includes 3,204 sworn officers and 479 civil officers, as shared by Maldives Police Service via email dated 11 May 2015.

¹⁷⁸ National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Government of Maldives (2014), *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives 2014*, Table 3.1: Maldivian population by sex and sex-ratio, and inter-censal variation of population, 1911-2014: <http://planning.gov.mv/yearbook2014/yearbook/Population/3.1.pdf>.

¹⁷⁹ Section 19, *Maldives Police Act, 2008*.

Out of a total strength of 3,683 including sworn officers and civil staff, there are 275 women police (not including women civil staff), constituting 7.4% of the force.¹⁸⁰ While this is the highest among the countries studied in this report, it is still very low, and in fact has decreased within the timeframe of this research.¹⁸¹

Table 8: Women police across departments¹⁸²

Department/Unit	Number of Women
Professional Standards Command	1
Administrative Unit	0
Internal Investigation Unit	3
Internal Intelligence Unit	0
Quality Assessment and Assurance Unit	0
Service Support Directorate	0
Logistical Service Department	3
Finance Department	8
Electrical & Mechanical Engineering Department	0
Medical Services Department	5
Service Development Directorate	0
Human Resource Department	13
Public Affairs Department	3
Police Club, Police Shop	1
Information and Communication Directorate	0
Information and Communication Technology Department	1
Cyber Security Operations Centre	0
Institute for Security and Law Enforcement Studies	9
Administrative Unit (ISLES)	1
Police Academy	3
Faculty of Crime, Leadership and Management	2
Department of Planning and Corporate Affairs	1
Commissioners Bureau	0
Executive Services Department	3
Strategy and Legal Department	3
Bureau of Crime Records	3
Central Operations Command	2
Police Communication Centre	19
Malé City Police	27
Hulhumalé Police	10
Traffic Management Department	14
Divisional Operations Command	0
Administrative Unit	1
Upper North Police Division	8
North Police Division	5
Central Police Division	1

180 As shared by Maldives Police Service with CHRI via email dated 11 May 2015.

181 Till November 2013, there were 280 women out of a total of 3,000 thus constituting just under 10% of the force. Updated figures provided by MPS in May 2015 showed that the number of women had decreased, though very slightly, to 275, but the overall size had grown to 3,683, meaning the representation fell to 7.4%.

182 Without overall figures for these departments it is difficult to make an assessment of the levels of representation of women.

Department/Unit	Number of Women
North Central Police Division	10
South Central Police Division	4
Upper South Police Division	3
South Police Division	11
Internal Security Command	0
Specialist Operations Department	17
Police Custodial Department	28
Marine Police Department	0
Vital Infrastructure Security Department	0
Directorate of Intelligence	4
Crime Investigations Command	0
Victims Support Unit	3
Drug Enforcement Department	6
Serious and Organised Crime Department	4
Family and Child Protection Department	12
Economic Crime Department	3
General Investigation Department	2
Forensic Service Directorate	10
Crime Scene Investigation Department	8
TOTAL	275

Table 9: Women Police across Divisions

Division	Number of Women
Administrative Unit	2
Malé City Police	26
Upper North Police Division	8
North Police Division	4
Central Police Division	1
North Central Police Division	9
South Central Police Division	4
Upper South Police Division	3
South Police Division	11
TOTAL	68

Out of 275 women, only 68 – approximately 25% – are deployed across divisions, and within this, 26 are with Malé city police and two are with the administrative unit, leaving only 40 out of 275 – approximately 14% – deployed in the islands. In general, the scattered geography and logistic difficulties has led to a desire among many MPS officers of both genders not to be on the frontline. Concern over low numbers of women in the islands, therefore, need not be attributable to gender alone; however, the specific factors acting as deterrents for women officers needs to be examined in more detail.

Analysis of the divisional spread and the figures compared to the numbers of police stations in each division throws up a worrying scenario.¹⁸³ According to the figures provided by MPS, the breakdown across islands is as follows:

¹⁸³ Maldives Police Service: <http://www.police.gov.mv/>.

Table 10: Island-wise Deployment of Women Police

Upper North Police Division	Number of Women
Ha. Dhiddhoo police station	1
Hdh. Kulhuduhfushi police station	1
Hdh. Makunudhoo police station	1
Sh. Funadhoo police station	2
Sh. Feevah police station	1
Ha. Hoarafushi police station	1
Sh. Komandoo police station	1
North Police Division	
B. Atoll	1
B. Thulhaadhoo police station	1
Lh. Naifaru police station	1
B. Eydhafushi police station	1
North Central Police Division	
Aa. Rashdhoo police station	2
Adh. Fenfushi police station	1
Adh. Mahibadhoo police station	6
Central Police Division	
F. Nilandhoo police station	1
South Central Police Division	
L. Gan police station	1
Th. Guraidhoo police station	1
L. Fonadhoo police station	1
L. Maavah police station	1
Upper south Police Division	
Gdh. Thinadhoo police station	2
Gdh. Fiyori police station	1
South Police Division	
Gn. Fuvahmulah police station	5
S. Hithadhoo police station	3
Addu City Police	1
S. Gan police station	2
Total	40

Table 11: Total Number of Police Stations¹⁸⁴

Name of division	Total no of Police Stations in Division	Number of Police Stations with Women Police Officers	Number with no Women (and %)
Upper North	15	7	8 (53%)
North Central	14	4	10 (71.5%)
Upper South	11	2	9 (90%)
South Central	12	4	8 (66%)
North	13	3	10 (77%)
South	4	4	0
Central	8	1	7 (87.5%)
Total	77	25	52 (67.5%)

The deployment indicates that in 67.5%, or 52 out of 77 stations, there are no women police officers. Only one division (South) has been able to ensure the presence of women officers in every police station. The exact reasons for this are unknown – but are presumably related to inadequate numbers, or logistical difficulties and lack of facilities for deploying women in islands that are not their own.

In a number of stations, there seem to be only one or two women officers, with the exceptions of Adh Mahibadhoo at six and Gn. Fuvamullah at five.¹⁸⁵ The figures also show that across ranks, there is a concentration of women at Constable, Corporal and Lance Corporal levels, with 193 out of the 275 women, or 70% serving in that role, and none at all in the top five most senior ranks.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Maldives Police Service: <https://www.police.gov.mv/>.

¹⁸⁵ Again, without the overall figures for these stations it is difficult to make assessments.

¹⁸⁶ These figures are examined in more detail under the section on promotion.

SECTION 2

Legal and Policy Framework

The Maldives Constitution of 2008 guarantees equality of women. Chapter II on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms contains a comprehensive list of civil and political, and social and economic rights, which includes specific protections of equality and non-discrimination:

- Article 17:** Prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, national origin, colour, sex, age, mental or physical disability, political or other opinion, property, birth or other status, or native island.
- Article 18:** Places a duty on the state to follow these provisions and promote the rights and freedoms.
- Article 20:** Guarantees equality before and under the law, and the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.
- Article 62:** Guarantees the rights equally to men and women.

Several gaps, however, remain in the legal system where women's equality is concerned. The NGO Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee for its examination of the Maldives in February 2015 points out:

"The 2008 Constitution with its Bill of Rights (Chapter 2) is a fundamental step forward towards aligning domestic legislation with CEDAW and other human rights Conventions to which the State is a signatory. Nevertheless, to date, the State has made negligible progress in this regard. The State has acknowledged elsewhere that 'the legal system lacks secondary legislation on equality and anti-discrimination'. The State has specifically reported that 'there is no anti-discrimination legislation currently in the Maldives.' In this context, the concern is as always, about the commitment of the State and the will of State agencies to prioritise and facilitate the production of such legislation".¹⁸⁷

The Maldives ratified CEDAW in 1993, with reservations on Article 7(a) and a blanket reservation on Article 16. The former has since been withdrawn but the latter remains in place.¹⁸⁸ However, international instruments to which the Maldives is signatory only take effect in domestic law when domestic legislation is adopted, and this has not as yet happened. An NGO Shadow report further notes that:

"Progress has been extremely slow in observing the State's obligations to the Convention".¹⁸⁹

There is a Gender Equality Policy in place complete with a Framework for Operationalisation which aims to:

"Promote substantive equality through a dual approach: Gender Mainstreaming in all areas and strategic action on Empowerment and Advancement of Women in all areas, so that women and men

187 Hope for Women NGO (2012), *Maldives NGO Shadow Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*, September 2012, p.23: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/HopeForWomen_MaldivesForPSWG.pdf.

188 Article 16 concerns the elimination of discrimination and ensuring equality in relation to marriage and family. Reservation put forward is as follows: "The Government of the Republic of Maldives reserves its right to apply Article 16 of the Convention concerning the equality of men and women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations without prejudice to the provisions of the Islamic Sharia, which govern all marital and family relations of the 100% Muslim population of the Maldives." CEDAW, Status of Ratification, Declarations and Reservations, Maldives: <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>.

189 Hope for Women (2012), NGO Shadow Report, pp. 4 and 23 respectively.

*can enjoy fundamental human rights and equality and rewards of democracy on a basis of equality of men and women”.*¹⁹⁰

It envisages: “A just society where equality of men and women are upheld, women enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms on a basis of equality of men and women, and both women and men are able to realize their full potential and participate in and benefit from democracy and development both in public and private life”.

To meet this goal, the document sets out a series of guiding principles, policy goals, strategies, and indicators of progress. Under this plan, all ministries – including that responsible for policing – are required to “take gender issues in consideration” and “give special attention to women/women’s issues”. Other than this, there are no specific gender equality policies specifically relating to policing.

The principal legislation governing policing is the Police Act, 2008 which defines the objectives, role, responsibilities, duties, basis and principles to be followed, administration, powers, immunities and all other principles applicable to policing in the country.¹⁹¹ It makes no reference to women in policing.

A new draft police law entitled the Maldives Police Service Bill, 2012 was tabled in Parliament in December 2012. Although this bill was never passed, it was a step, albeit symbolic, forward where women police are concerned as it made specific provision in relation to women police officers.¹⁹² Clause 15(b) on ranks and grades states:

*“In assigning positions within the Police Service, the Commissioner shall give precedence to attain representation of as many cities, atolls and islands of the Maldives; and to open the opportunity for representation of women in the police service in their fullest capacity”.*¹⁹³

The 2008 police legislation has been supplemented by several Strategic Plans for the police. The first, covering the period 2007-2011, was designed to aid the transition into a civilian institution and set out a vision for a community-oriented, professional, efficient police service. Under the goal of building organisational effectiveness and developing good governance with the police, it sets out one of the ways of achieving this as:

*“Enhancing the role of women in policing to encourage and support women’s participation in frontline roles, leadership and management positions”.*¹⁹⁴

However, there is no further reporting as to how this was to be achieved. Furthermore, research carried out by CHRI and published in 2011 – which included surveying police officers and the public – found that implementation

190 *National Gender Policy and Framework for Operationalisation*, Republic of Maldives, May 2009: http://www.aidsdatahub.org/sites/default/files/documents/National_Gender_Equality_Maldives_2009.pdf.

191 *Maldives Police Act*, 2008, Law number 05/2008 unofficial translation, available at Network for Improved Policing in South Asia, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative: <http://www.nipsa.in/maldives/resources/maldives-police-act-2008-english.html>.

192 The Maldives Police Service Bill, 2012 was tabled in the People’s Majlis in December 2012 and was referred to the National Security Committee for review. The bill sets out how the Maldives Police Service is constituted and organised as well as the responsibilities, powers and all other matters applicable to the service: http://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1033_Maldives_Police_Bill_2012_-_English_translation_v2.pdf (This is an unofficial translation of the Bill by CHRI). However, it has not come up for discussion since then. With a new Parliament, the Bill stands lapsed.

193 Draft Maldives Police Service Bill, 2012, unofficial translation, Network for Improved Policing in South Asia, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative: http://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1033_Maldives_Police_Bill_2012_-_English_translation_v2.pdf.

194 Maldives Police Service, *The Way Forward: Project Progress, November 2009 – Strategic Plan 2007-2011*, p.21: [http://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1062_Maldives_Police_Service_Strategic_Plan_\(2007-2011\).pdf](http://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1062_Maldives_Police_Service_Strategic_Plan_(2007-2011).pdf).

of the plan had been “*partial at best*”.¹⁹⁵ The partial and incomplete integration of women clearly prompted stronger efforts, as reflected in the subsequent plan.¹⁹⁶

These goals have been fleshed out in the Business Plan, 2014-2015 where the role of women police is seen as central to “improving service through creative means, embedding technology and resource optimisation for cost effective methods”.¹⁹⁷ The Plan commits to the following activities during 2014-15:

- Carrying out gender sensitisation programmes
- Special initiatives to increase women police officers in managerial roles
- Increase women police officers in operational policing
- Introduce a fair, flexible, and safe policy for expecting and nursing mothers
- Create a women police officers representative body and facilitate its functioning.

Some progress has been made against these targets. For instance, the department has put together a policy order on forming a Women Association of Police (which is pending approval of the board). The police claim the order was drafted following a consultation held with women police officers and upon taking their suggestions on board.

Efforts are also being made to introduce policies to improve the participation of women in policing, such as for example, recruitment and deployment on the islands that are discussed later in the relevant sections of the report.¹⁹⁸

Finally, as in other contexts, there is a legal imperative whereby women police officers are required in Maldives. Women officers are needed to search females and deal with female victims.¹⁹⁹ Of further and particular relevance to the country is the high level of tourism, including female tourists, for which women police officers are necessary.

195 CHRI (2011), *Implementation of the Maldives Police Service Strategic Plan, 2007-2011: An Analysis*: http://www.nipsa.in/uploads/country_resources_file/1057_Implementation_of_the_Maldives_Police_Service_Strategic_Plan_2007-2011_-_An_Analysis_CHRI_2011.pdf.

196 Maldives Police Service, Strategic Plan, 2014-2018, p.20: <http://www.police.gov.mv/uploads/downloads/publications-11/de190f3b-8051244dd4198001ca86bb0c.pdf>.

197 Maldives Police Service Business Plan 2014, p. 59. Hard copy available with CHRI.

198 Presentation by Maldives Police Service, “Policy Initiatives on gender equality in Maldives Police Service,” at the Conference organised by CHRI in November 2013, Kathmandu, Nepal, available at <http://www.nipsa.in/maldives/resources/policy-initiatives-on-gender-equality-in-maldives-police-service.html>.

199 Section 33, Regulation on Executing of the Constitutional Authority and Discretion Accorded to the Police, unofficial translation commissioned by CHRI in 2014.

SECTION 3

Experiences and Challenges

Attitude of the Public

Any consideration of the public's attitude to women police needs to be placed in the context of the general perception and opinion of the police arising from the political unrest and the role of the police within that. For example, a recent public opinion survey on the institutions of democracy in the country found split attitudes to the police. Approximately one-third of respondents (32%) said they have "a great deal of confidence" in the police, although the same proportions report they have "no confidence at all" in the police (32%):²⁰⁰

The majority of women officers surveyed for this research indicated an overall positive public response to seeing women police on duty, even though the number of women on operational duty remain low.²⁰¹ However, the interviews and discussions that were held reveal a more mixed picture. A focus group of women officers commented that:

"Women also need to be motivated to work frontline. The perception of the general public towards women police plays a huge role, and mostly these views stem from religion".

A senior woman police officer recounted her experiences:

"The public and even women want to see male staff. Even for a slightest thing, if a woman is at the helm, they blame the women... society is not able to accept women as much as we want. People respect me on the face but behind me, they could be saying many things".

One of the concerns of having women concentrated in desk jobs is that they are less likely to be seen in, and by the public, which is actually needed in order to challenge and change public perceptions. This was also noted in discussions by an NGO participant who commented that:

"We need more women out of desk jobs and seen on the street to change attitudes".

It is clear that some initiatives have been taken, for example, videos have been made by the police service to address the public perception of women in the police. Focus group discussions highlighted wider efforts to engage more generally with the community, schools and NGOs, which will in turn help change attitudes to women police that are involved in these. One focus group commented that:

"Things are changing...women are coming out of the shell. Also recently a batch of women police officers completed a public order training. Plus we have now six commissioned officers. This is a major achievement".

200 The remaining 37% had "some confidence" in the police. Transparency Maldives (2014), *Democracy at the Crossroads*, p.49: <http://transparency.mv/files/download/e8f3d2774a2df995ea1481b01d361330.pdf>.

201 When asked how the community and public respond when they see women police performing their duties, the majority responded positively at 66.7%, with only 5.6% saying the response was negative, and 18.9% saying it was indifferent.

Recruitment Processes

The recruitment process in the Maldives consists of several stages.²⁰² It begins with educational requirements which differ according to level. For the rank of Constables, applicants have to complete at least ‘O’ levels at Grade 10. Those who have completed an undergraduate degree are recruited directly to Sergeant level; those who have completed a masters degree are recruited at Chief Station Inspector level and those with a PhD are recruited at Inspector level. If educational qualifications are met, an application form is filled which is then vetted, before height and weight are checked. This is followed by an entrance test on General Knowledge, English, Maths and the Dhivehi language. Upon passing this, a candidate has to undergo a physical test. Those who pass this are then required to take a swimming test. Then there is an interview, followed by a medical examination. Whoever makes it through these various stages must then relinquish any political party affiliation before being declared a recruit.

While the official procedure is quite rigorous, comments were made in interviews to the effect that in reality applicants are sometimes given a second chance, or that discretion is exercised in relation to height and weight for example:

“Height may be a factor. The rule is 5 feet 3 inches but the organisation has relaxed the rules”.

No quotas have been set in the Maldives; nor have there been any specific targeted recruitment drives or measures to encourage women to apply. One senior women police officer commented that:

“The organisation is not doing much to recruit more women”.

This is also observed in the fact that a recent increase in size of the force did not include an increase in the number of women police, thus resulting in a decrease in representation of women overall from just under 10% in 2013 to 7.4% in 2015. Of the women police officers surveyed for this research, only 25.6% thought the government had taken any measures to increase the number of women in the police, with 74.4% stating that they had not.

Another interviewee stated that an adjustment had been made. However, this is not clear from the formal process laid out. Yet another senior police officer expressed the view that:

“The parameters can be modified/alterd to get more women. For example, there are physical requirements like a height requirement but if we can lower it even by a few inches, it will encourage women to apply. Height typically does not make a difference particularly in back-end tasks. Again, there are physical tests during the recruitment process which are difficult for girls to get through. I am not advocating reduced physical test standard. My strategy to overcome would be to go for direct recruitment – go to girls who have shown they are physically fit in their school life or to reduce at the recruitment level but not at the service level. In other words, we can increase the number of days in the recruit training calendar. Usually it is a three month course but if we can extend it to six months allowing people to become physically fit – this will work”.

What is clear is that the process is quite an arduous one, and that any discretion or relaxation that is being exercised should be formally reviewed and adopted, since those considering applying may be discouraged by the regulations stipulated in the official procedures. The process would also benefit from a gender audit to

202 Maldives Police Service, Recruitment Process and Aptitude Test: <https://www.police.gov.mv/about/AptitudeTest.pdf>; and Regulation on Recruitment in Police Service, Unofficial translation, commissioned by Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

assess which, if any, of the requirements act as a potential block to women in particular. One comment made in the research opined that women perform better, particularly in relation to communication and presentation skills:

“Women are much smarter than the male applicants”.

As already highlighted, lack of police women on the frontline, particularly in the islands, is a serious concern. A UNDP report highlights the general challenge in informing women across the islands on employment options:

*“Lack of information on professional options, employment opportunities and availability of vocational training are barriers to seeking employment for young women on islands”.*²⁰³

This applies equally to information in relation to a career in policing as an option. There do appear to be a number of awareness initiatives underway, albeit somewhat ad hoc rather than targeted in nature.

“During our awareness programmes and discussions, we encourage women to participate. Specifically, we organise special sessions in schools. We give extra information to girl students, the opportunities the kind of work they are going to have on joining the police. We are doing this as some parts of society still have wrong perceptions of policing. They don’t have the right kind of information about what policing entails. Through these awareness programmes, we are trying to combat the misperception about the police role too. They believe police only handle hooligans so feel that is not a job for women. Lot of work behind the scenes. Even technical areas like forensics, instructors, here women officers can really contribute”.

Another interviewee commented :

“Awareness programmes should be done more than are done now...we are doing quite a lot but need to increase”.

There are also plans underway to begin more targeted recruitment in the islands and atolls and to review the process if it is unsuccessful. The problem was acknowledged by the then Commissioner of Police:

*“Challenge we would have is recruitment. One of the difficulties we face is to fill vacancies. Because of the geography of the country, some women will have difficulties”.*²⁰⁴

However, since the most recent figures supplied indicate that no additional women were recruited in an overall increase, a review process will be required to ascertain why the stagnation in recruitment, and the identification of positive measures to be undertaken to ensure that women regularly and consistently enter the police.

Male Culture within the Police Service

Almost all female interviewees acknowledged that there was a male culture at play within the MPS, with some commenting that this was not a problem that was unique to Maldives, which is of course true. For instance:

“Yes this is a male-dominant organisation. There are things we should change in order to give fair treatment to female employees”.

203 UNDP Maldives (2011), *Situational Report on “Women in Public Life in the Maldives”*, p.15: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/maldives/docs/Democratic%20Governance/Women_in_Public_Life_Report.pdf. An additional challenge discussed later is that women from one atoll cannot be readily deployed in other islands until adequate separate facilities are put in place, since there are difficulties for women to share accommodation with male colleagues.

204 CHRI Interview with the then Commissioner of Police, Maldives Police Service, conducted in August 2013.

In addition to these statements, anecdotes and comments that emerged from some of the senior male police officers reveal how engrained the attitudes are. One such statement we came across during the research was:

“The profession seems to be a very tough job, and women tend to be soft”.

Commenting on the fact that there was no woman at the time on the Executive Board of the police, another senior officer explained that it was because women did not have the necessary qualifications and experience, and that they did have a woman officer previously on the Board but the experience was not good. This both fails to recognise the skill-sets that might exist within women officers as well as not acknowledge the barriers that women police officers face in trying to rise through the ranks and get the necessary qualifications and experience.

The same officer recounted performance reviews with male staff who stated that they wanted to be women and when asked why, said it was because they would score more; thus harbouring a notion that women were treated with leniency. Of course, one reason why women may be scoring better is that they have performed better, but it was not clear if these attitudes were challenged by the senior officer concerned. Not combating these perceptions with facts only serves to deepen stereotypes and grudges that already exist.

Issues in relation to a male culture were also raised in focus group discussions, with participants citing problems in relation to superiority and lack of recognition from their male colleagues, for example:

“Most men do not respect us”.

A constant refrain in interviews and discussions was that women police officers felt they had to work twice as hard to prove themselves. Examples were also given of more senior women police officers being undermined by juniors, which was in turn not challenged by their seniors. One commented that:

“When I was new to the organisation, I was asked to handle simple cases. My superior sometimes directly supervises my juniors instead of talking to me. My boss does not believe me. He believes the island commanders who are below me. Most seniors have difficulty believing me...But he believes male colleagues who are of the same rank as me”.

However, as highlighted in other countries elsewhere, there can be problems with women police officers adopting rather than challenging the male culture and attributes that exist. This also emerged in the Maldives, with one participant stating that:

“Many female police officers are not overly sensitive to women and children so need to sensitise them as well as male officers”.

CHRI's survey of women police officers revealed mixed experiences: when asked about the attitude of their male colleagues towards them, 43.3% stated that it had been accommodating, while 12.2% said it had been rigid and 28.9% stated it was indifferent. Interestingly 14.4% did not answer this question, one of only 3 out of 23 primary questions where this happened (all other questions elicited some kind of response), indicating perhaps a reluctance to honestly answer the question because of fear of repercussion.

Harassment at the Workplace

An order to ban sexual harassment in the police was introduced in 2012 and designates the existing internal Professional Standards Command (PSC), the department responsible for disciplinary issues, as the body to deal with complaints. So far, according to official figures provided, there has been only one complaint of sexual harassment to the PSC. It seems very unlikely that this means there has only been one incident of sexual harassment in that period – on the contrary it is clear that sexual harassment is a problem that is under-reported, unacknowledged and inaccurately recorded.

Like the elephant in the room, sexual harassment in the workplace is a significant problem but about which no one wants to speak openly, whether in the Maldives or elsewhere. It was adverted to in the interviews and focus groups where it was acknowledged as extant and difficult to address. Examples of other incidents were recounted and there were also clearly differing responses from male and female participants in the research.

Among the women police officers who participated, almost all stated that harassment was a problem. One focus group described it as a *“huge concern”*. The difficulties of getting acknowledgement and accountability are illustrated in a case that was recounted where 11 girls (including one of the participants) complained against a senior officer for sexual harassment. At first he was suspended but the case went to court where he was acquitted and he rejoined the service, where he is still working although he has been demoted. The participants stated that he often tries to scare girls who have complained against him. The issue seems to have been taken to the Commissioner at the time, but no action had been taken thus far. Another focus group agreed that harassment was a concern; that young female recruits are particularly targeted and that a women’s police association was needed to offer support. A senior woman police officer interviewed cited numerous examples of comments made to feeding mothers in relation to breastmilk, comments about the body parts of female police officers, comments about clothing and other inappropriate requests related to sexual behaviour. She felt that:

“Women did not want to respond to such comments because they have to work with them”.

She also identified the difficulties faced by women police officers in reporting harassment owing to a lack of any support network for victims; an extremely low rate of success in the past; and victimisation and vilification of those who do make complaints:

“Victimisation is a big problem, if a case is not proved then the woman gets blamed”.

Senior male officers expressed vastly different views: from an acknowledgment that *“it is a serious concern”* to *“not a problem here”* to blaming the victim:

“Not many cases. One case – man officer was station inspector. After investigation, we realised it was not sexual harassment but officers were settling personal scores. The woman was Corporal or Sergeant – not sure. This was 2 years ago. She complained because she was shifted out to another department. That is why she complained. Head of Department wanted to change her to another department – she refused, and she placed a complaint against him. She was given in writing not to repeat such complaints again”.

Other comments included that:

“No study has been done on the extent of sexual harassment so can’t rely on hearsay alone”.

“I don’t think this is an issue – we have a policy that we don’t allow sexual harassment. I don’t think recently there has been any case but we have to look at the Professional Standards Command”.

Anyone can complain to the PSC or meet with the seniors there. But to my mind there is no instance. The policy is there, everybody knows that it is against our code of conduct”.

However, others acknowledged the problem and the need to address it:

“There have been instances where female police officers came to me and raised concerns. This is my personal opinion. There are mechanisms established in the police but I don’t think it is very effective in addressing the issue. When I was head of a particular department, many female officers approached me, although this wasn’t really the mandate of my department. I had to hear their voice and pass it to responsible officers. The way they saw it was that officers responsible at that time weren’t very sensitive about their concerns. Which is why the female officers did not want to go to them, did not believe will help. So it was neither reported nor talked about”.

Furthermore, in the survey of women police officers conducted for this research, a quarter of the respondents said they had faced harassment at the workplace – this is notably higher than the normal response to questions asked in this regard. Of these, just over half said they referred the incident to a competent authority.

It is clear, therefore, that there is a problem, and serious consideration needs to be given to address the problem, such as introducing legislation as in India and Pakistan, as well as strengthening the existing order with a zero tolerance policy, and clear consequences in terms of discipline. The policy should have adequate measures to protect complainants and victims against subsequent reprisals. A concerted effort is required to ensure there are women officers and staff at the PSC to deal specifically with complaints of harassment since the statistical data above shows only one woman at the moment in the PSC. Finally, there needs to be broader awareness and confidence built among women police officers about the existence and effectiveness of mechanisms to address harassment.

Appropriate Facilities and Policies

Having the appropriate facilities and policies in place to meet the different needs of women is an essential component in attracting and retaining women in policing. Without these, women may look to alternative career choices that offer more in the way of flexibility and safety; or those who do join the police may leave after having a family, for example, if the policies are not in place to enable them to balance work and home life in a manageable way.

In relation to facilities in the Maldives Police Service, the picture is a rather mixed one. It is acknowledged that there is the physical challenge of the spread of police stations across the islands; equally however, other large countries have similar physical challenges of providing appropriate facilities across a wide geographical space, in rural and inaccessible locations, etc.

In relation to separate barracks for rest, toilet facilities and space for women police officers to use, for example, a focus group of female officers stated that there were:

“Not enough. We do not have barracks of our own. Sometimes in the stretch of hours we work, if we want to rest a bit, we have to go home. It is quite difficult for operational officers”.

Another group commented that:

“There are no restrooms, no accommodations and there are ladies toilets which men also use”.

One senior female police officer commented that:

“Women don’t have barracks. I fought for it but lost. One of the reasons given to me for rejecting the request for a female barrack is that it was given to women earlier, but nobody used it. However, one senior woman officer told me that this is untrue, and that it was rejected even before she tried for it”.

Even the then Commissioner of Police acknowledged that:

“Most police stations don’t have a separate facility for women”.

However, the solution he provided was that new police stations being built would have separate facilities for women; and that in relation to existing police stations, the new initiative of recruiting women from and deploying them in their own islands meant that they could go home. There are a number of problems with this: first, it may not be practical or there may be insufficient time to go home; second, women police officers who go home to rest or use facilities risk finding themselves at the receiving end of comments from male colleagues. Third, and importantly, it does nothing to address the needs of existing women police officers who are on operational duty in islands that are not their own, where there are no barracks and they cannot go home. In all, it seems an inadequate response to the problem that in essence ignores the existing needs of women police officers. What is required is an audit of current facilities to identify what is needed in all existing police stations, followed by the provision of resources and a commitment to meet these needs.

In addition, there are no day care facilities; despite comments by female police officers in focus groups and interviews revealing a clear desire for these:

“We want the department to have day care facilities”.

“There should definitely be day care facilities”.

“A day care centre would be very useful...if there was a day care facility run by the Police Family Association, women officers can go for shift duties”.

By contrast, the response of one senior male police officer was that:

*“No day care facilities are there in the country. Police Family Association tried to establish such facilities but, generally, they are not very welcome in Maldives. Our communities are very small”.*²⁰⁵

What is clear here is a difference in view between male and female officers – with the former finding excuses not to provide day care, despite the latter clearly expressing the desire for it to be provided.

Even uniforms for female police officers appear to be problematic as there are no separate uniforms. One specific example was given that there are two types of footwear for police officers – court shoes and operational boots – but only the court shoes are available in smaller sizes. Therefore, women police officers have no operational footwear.

In relation to policies that are in place, there are provisions at a country-wide level for maternity leave, and unpaid extended maternity leave in government jobs that is also applicable to the police. Women are also not required to do night shift after childbirth. In addition, there is a provision in government jobs – including the police – for women who rejoin after maternity leave where two hour-blocks per day are allocated for feeding and other essential tasks regarding attending to the baby. However, this clearly does not reflect the unpredictability of – and thus the flexibility required for – when a baby will need to be fed.

²⁰⁵ This officer went on to suggest that there was resistance because of negativity surrounding children’s homes where there had been cases of abuse – clearly confusing children’s homes with daycare centres, indicating a potential need for awareness-raising among male officers on the nature and purpose of daycare facilities.

It was also suggested by a number of participants that no matter what policies are in place, there are attitudinal problems at play. Comments included, for example, that:

“There are some clauses in the employment regulation; however, the department has to be more lenient towards female police officers. My feeling is that even if a female police officer requests time or shares some problem, if department heads are not sensitive, they will not allow such requests”.

“Regarding flexible hours, there is huge resistance from male officers”.

Efforts being made by the Maldives Police Service in relation to policies that encourage women²⁰⁶ risk being undermined by prevailing attitudes towards the need to accommodate women. Overall, what emerged in the research was inadequate facilities, an insufficient response to this lack of facilities and clear differences between the views of male and female officers in terms of what was needed.

Deployment and Allocation of Duties

As revealed in the statistical analysis, there is a predominance of women officers in departmental and office-based roles, and a severe lack on operational duties, with many police stations across the atolls having no women police officers at all. Numerous participants, particularly senior male officers, expressed the view that it was not a problem as women did prefer desk jobs. The women officers who participated in the interviews and focus groups for this research expressed mixed views as to whether they preferred or wanted to be on the frontline or at a desk. However, it was highlighted by a number of other participants that most police officers – of both genders – prefer not to be on the beat:

“Everyone, even men officers, want to have a desk job”.

The interviews also revealed other differences of opinion and views on the deployment of women officers. A number of senior (male officers) believed that it was not a problem since there were women across all the departments and performing all duties. Comments included:

“I don’t think there is any area women can’t do...female officers are there across departments. All our policing tasks are gender neutral. Even frontline policing women are doing”.

“There is no obstruction to anything they want and show commitment”.

“Women generally have fear. In our organisation there are no obstructions”.

“There is no restriction. For any position, we advertise within the force. So whoever meets the criteria can apply. There is a small committee looks at CVs internally and then interviews and selects best for the job”.

A number of questions arise from this last statement in particular. Are there any women on the committee? What are the criteria set – do any of them present barriers for women officers? Are women given the skills, exposure, experience and training required for various positions? Are any proactive measures taken to encourage women to apply or otherwise redress the imbalance that exists?

On the face of it, there is no distinction between men and women where tasking is concerned. Certainly it is not acknowledged by senior male officers who point to the fact that all jobs are advertised and processes are

²⁰⁶ Such as a 1 in 4 reservation for women on all board and committee structures and a reserved number of slots for women in training programmes.

apparently gender neutral. However, the numbers tell a different story in terms of where women are deployed. Unacknowledged biases may be at play, but it is also true that the inherent rigours and dangers of operational duty dissuade both men and women from these tasks. The long-term volatility and conflicts of recent years may also have made operational duties less appealing for both sexes.

It was suggested in the research that there would be a change in policy whereby desk jobs would be done by support staff and all sworn officers must go on operational duties. For those purposes, the police were, at the time of fieldwork, in the process of recruiting support staff so that the sworn officers would be freed from administrative tasks and be deployed. Perhaps because it is new, there was a lack of awareness among other participants about this – as it was in fact a concrete suggestion made by one of the focus groups of women officers:

“We need to bring sworn officers to operational duties and admin jobs should be given to civil staff”.

Female police officers who participated also expressed the view that:

“The thinking of leadership is to have more men, or send out more men for frontline jobs. The perspective is to have more men on the front and that women should be inside”.

Nonetheless, it was clear that many women police officers felt operational duties were difficult for those with family commitments. Comments included that:

“We would not mind being posted in the Atolls but difficulty is the families – can’t leave children”.

“It would be difficult for women with kids to do operational or frontline duties”.

“There is resistance from families in particular in relation to frontline duties”.

On the other hand, some women police officers expressed the problems related to discrimination that they face:

“Importance is given to male officers. They feel female police officers should do desk jobs, attend calls and not go for patrolling duties. If they [the male officers] are in the station and doing desk work, even when they are supposed to take calls, they want the female staff to do the desk work”.

It is clear there are several issues at play simultaneously that interconnect: discrimination and stereotyping of roles for women; the lack of adequate facilities and policies that enable women to undertake duties comfortably and in a way that is compatible with domestic responsibilities; and wider attitudes relating to those very responsibilities.

One senior male officer also acknowledged the problem and expressed concern:

“Majority are in back office. This is worrying for me. Back office means all administrative jobs. Female police are very qualified officers”.

Another acknowledged:

“There is a stereotype thinking while assigning tasks. Women are considered to have soft skills. Based on this stereotype, seniors assign tasks. This happens mainly because of ignorance”.

Discussions also revealed several other issues that may contribute to the problem – for example, it was stated that male recruits tend to finish before females and were posted first to the frontline so that women when they

finished training were then assigned administrative tasks. It was also stated that men were preferred for public order situations:

“In public order or violent situations, when they run out of men they bring female police officers in but they are not experienced in this and then don’t perform well and are berated for it. This hesitation to violent situations is a human reaction, not a gendered one – men are afraid too”.

Another woman police officer revealed that:

“I want to be an investigator and do forensics but within the police I am in another department. Senior staff do not give career guidance. No consultants to guide us. We are not allocated departments suitably, based on our qualifications... Women officers need to be shown more confidence – there’s a feeling among officers that they are not important, so many lose the spark and motivation across the line”.

Enabling the deployment of women across all functions and roles is not just a matter of equality for women, but is also necessary to challenge public perceptions and stereotypes, and increase confidence both in women police and in policing generally. On the face of it, there is an indication that it is difficult for women with families to accept postings in different atolls. In that respect, the forthcoming recruitment and deployment in-island drive is a welcome step forward to redressing the imbalance. Nonetheless, it is incumbent on the MPS to look at existing policies, processes, facilities and attitudes (and not just those applicable to new recruits) to identify and address the barriers that exist.

In the survey conducted, most respondents – almost 75% – stated that women police should perform their duties in remote islands, so there does not appear to be resistance to this but rather a desire that it should happen. A recommendation from one of the focus groups conducted was that:

*“In every police station there should be women police officers”.*²⁰⁷

While most of those surveyed did feel that women were assigned frontline duties (70%), over half of those (55.5%) felt that this was at a limited level. There was quite a high percentage of female officers (38.9%) who felt that female police personnel should not be placed alongside male counterparts; something that may be worthy of further exploration to identify the cause.

Training and Support²⁰⁸

In relation to basic recruit training, there did not appear to be any issues regarding the separation of male and female recruits. All recruits are provided the same training alongside each other, although some comments were made in relation to harassment of female recruits by seniors. In the survey conducted, 87% had participated in joint training with male personnel.

As for content, no significant problems were identified; in fact several participants commented on women’s superior performance, such as:

“Trainees did not find the syllabus hard. Women recruits were very much into it. They were the ones coming up with best results”.

²⁰⁷ It is worth noting at this point that unlike some other countries, all-women police stations are not to be found in the Maldives, nor did the research identify any desire for this to happen. Rather, the assignment of women across all aspects of policing seemed to be the preferred approach.

²⁰⁸ CHRI does not have access to an English version of MPS regulations on training.

“Of those who enrol for training, I found female police officers’ commitment and motivation is quite remarkable”.

However, problems did emerge on discrimination and attitudes experienced at the training level by some of the women police officers who participated. One example was cited whereby a woman recruit noticed that women were given chores like cleaning and sweeping while the men were given chores outside the training centre and got more of a variety. She complained and then the chore given to the female recruits was to move heavy iron rods from one side of a wall to another. This was not a chore that had been given to the male recruits. It was a very difficult and painful exercise so her female colleagues then berated her and she was unpopular with them. She recounted that it felt like being taught a lesson. While this anecdote was slightly older, and some views expressed in the research indicated that training had improved, the survey findings reveal that almost 40% of those questioned felt that the training of females differed from that of males; of that group, 80% felt that it was more lenient.

Another example of differential treatment was that when there were periods of unrest in the islands, the recruits were called upon, but the men got more opportunities to go outside for these while the women generally never got past the gates. When instructors were questioned about it, they said it was for the safety and protection of the women, that it was too dangerous for them.

One female officer who worked in the training department commented that women were treated as sex objects and female instructors had no power. If they question or challenge the situation their life is made miserable; when she took issue with it, she was removed from the department.

There are also problems related to accessibility of in-service training. While there are now reserved places for women for this training, there are obstacles to participation that need to be addressed. Examples were cited: of family pressures; of husbands refusing to let their wives who were police officers travel to other atolls for training purposes; of women being unable to avail of training because there was a lack of accommodation available for them in the training institute. The focus groups also identified that male officers can go more easily to training programmes and get more training opportunities. A number of the focus groups specifically wanted this research to recommend that opportunities for training be provided.

For the Maldives Police Service, the same challenges that face women with family commitments in relation to deployment apply equally to training, and so any policies or initiatives undertaken to address the former issues must apply also to training.

Retention and Promotion

The problem of retention is often not captured if the numbers leaving or their reasons for doing so are not captured, as was the case in the Maldives. This research was unable to gather information and assess the situation, which is something that needs to be done.

However, there were differing views between men and women police officers who participated. Comments from women police included:

“The organisation is not focusing on retaining women. Many are quitting their jobs”.

“There have been a few cases of women leaving straight after training because they could not take the harassment”.

“To retain women staff, the police is not doing much. They should come out with special schemes for women like day care facilities, comfortable working hours”.

Comments from male officers by contrast included:

“Not really [a problem]. Policing is a very attractive job”.

“No research on why women are leaving. But there is no difference in terms of policy”.

Many women identified the challenges of trying to balance work and family as a reason for leaving. This points again to the need to have facilities, policies and practices in place to ensure women can manage work and family commitments rather than leave the post. Male officers expressed similar views about women leaving because of family, but not necessarily in a way that appreciated the nature of the problem or the role the police service could play in helping to address it:

“One of the issues is that we are culturally a male-dominated society. Once you get married, have children, one tends to stay home. In many cases, women take the decision to stay home”.

“Yes, women officers do leave the service. When they get into police service, normally they are single. At some stage of their life, they get married and have a family. That is the time normally when you find women officers leaving their jobs. There might be reasons like concerns over raising children the right way”.

The latter officer did however concede, when probed, that:

“There are things police can also do...We normally encourage them to stay...We usually follow strict rules but give quite a lot of leeway to women officers, things that we can do to help them. We use our discretion to do all that we can to help. Despite those efforts, some police officers do quit. Often it's not their own decision, various other factors influence the decision”.

One other male officer did recognise the problem and the need to address it:

“Yes, this is a problem. It is an issue we need to address in MPS. Part of the problem is that most women police join before they get married. Life changes after marriage, after children. We need to find a way to help these girls from 25 to 36 help them get through this stage so they can continue thereafter. Usually female police are taking no pay leave when children are young. They'd take one year leave. We need to find a way to help these girls get through this stage from 25 to 36. If you are above this age, then chances are higher for retention. One of the things very difficult to do is shift duties particularly if you have children. Most of the girls come from islands so their parents are back in the islands”.

As for promotion, as with many other police services around the world, the Maldives Police Service suffers from a serious under-representation of women in senior ranks. Statistics provided by the MPS show the position of female officers across ranks as follows:

Table 12: Number of Women Police across Ranks

Rank	Number of Women in 2013	Number of Women in 2015
Constable	35	25
Police Corporal	87	78
Police Lance Corporal	114	80
Sergeant	19	50
Staff Sergeant	11	20
Station Inspector	5	7
Chief Station Inspector	3	4
Sub-Inspector	5	6
Inspector	0	4
Chief Inspector	1	1
Superintendent	0	0
Chief Superintendent	0	0
Assistant Commissioner	0	0
Deputy Commissioner	0	0
Commissioner	0	0

There are some positive improvements in the figures between 2013 and 2015, most notably the increase in women Staff Sergeants and Sergeants. There has been a corresponding decrease in the number of Corporals. There has also been an improvement in the number of women in the top 10 ranks, from 14 in 2013 to 22 in 2015. In the top seven ranks, there has been a jump from one to five women.

Nonetheless, there is much room for improvement. There remain no females in the top five ranks. While the increase in the top 10 ranks overall is most welcome, the 22 officers constitute a meagre 8% of the total 275 women police, with the remainder languishing in the bottom five ranks.

It is acknowledged that there was a lack of women in the former NSS, and that the civilian police is relatively new and undergoing reform. Still, it has been ten years and the lack of progression of women in that time is a matter of serious concern.

Other sections point to clear obstacles and issues that need to be addressed if women are to progress in the organisation. Problems that were identified in interviews and focus groups relating to promotion in particular are that women are not getting the necessary experience and exposure to apply for promotion as they are not moving beyond desk roles. Furthermore, since men can go more easily for training, this adds to their promotion chances.

Other comments made by women police officers included:

“There is not much opportunity to rise up the ladder. Promotion is based on education and service. Most of the time we are doing clerical jobs like writing letters, reports”.

“For a female officer to go higher she needs to study and get educational qualifications. For men, it is easier”.

“Promotions are all open in theory but perceptions of women’s capabilities affect this”.

“Yes there are barriers...women have to work twice as hard to prove themselves”.

One example was cited of a women officer whose promotion was held back for several years while a complaint lodged against her by a junior was investigated, whereas her boss, who was caught stealing money, was promoted shortly thereafter.

The attitudinal problems that were expressed in the research among some senior male officers point in particular to a failure to recognise the problems and inequality that exist. It is instead dismissed, as the opportunities being open to all, implying that women just do not take them. Indeed, specific comments were made that:

“There is no obstruction. They have to show their commitment”.

“They are not ambitious towards the senior posts”.

“No barriers. Our system is such that one joins at lower ranks and then get promoted to higher ranks. If you are recruited directly to a senior level, and if you are not a good fit in the culture, then it is not easy to work. In the past we’ve had some incidents. The first female commissioned officer was a very competent officer. She was recruited at Chief Station level, was with us for four years. But then she left, partly due to systems and partly due to culture. She was asked to do a regional duty but could not go, and so resigned. The point is it is not advisable to recruit directly to the very senior level. The discourse at the executive level is very different from other jobs so one will not feel part of the discussion”.

This last statement in particular – coming from a senior male officer – is very worrying and points to a deeply engrained culture and attitude. The inability to adapt or perform is laid squarely on the woman, rather than questioning or examining whether there is anything in the existing (male) executive level discourse that is problematic or needs to be reviewed.

There is a real and pressing need for the MPS to examine why women are not progressing and to put in place a clear programme of action to address it. There have been measures introduced to fast-track women but they need to be re-examined to establish why they are seemingly ineffective. Probing questions need to be asked as to why there is no woman on the executive board. The answer given that there are no female officers with the experience and qualifications needs to be challenged with the question – why? How can that be changed? Given the seriousness of the problem, it is insufficient at this stage to be complacent and wait for women to come through in the fullness of time. This approach fails to recognise the problems and obstacles in place, in which case they will remain unaddressed.

SECTION 4

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is clear that there are several challenges to increase representation and improve the experiences of women in the Maldives Police Service. Underlying these is that despite the presence of very good intentions on the part of many, there is a troubling sense of a lack of awareness, or misunderstanding, of the problems from a gender perspective.

There is a certain amount of will and commitment at the senior level to ensure that the police service enhances and encourages women. This has manifested itself through a number of positive initiatives, such as reserving places on boards and committees to give women officers more of a role in decision-making, as well as attempting to recruit and thereafter deploy female officers in their own areas. There was also acknowledgement among some of these senior officers about the problems and challenges that exist. Among women officers there is a feeling that some things were beginning to change: for example, they were positive about the fact that there were now more women officers in senior posts.

The size and geography of the country, as well as the recent political turmoil, all present their own unique context and challenges for policing in general. The police service is also still in many ways in a process of transition. Turning a historically male-dominated profession into one that is more equal and respectful for women is in itself a process. Particularly where changes in culture are required, it is not going to happen in a short space of time. It is an especially challenging task in a culture that adopts a particular view about the role of women in society. So the efforts made to date by the Maldives Police Service are to be welcomed and encouraged.

However, the differences of view between women and men officers on issues such as day care, harassment and promotion which are of fundamental importance from a gender perspective should be of concern. These are strong indicators of problems based on gender and point to the need for a thorough examination of the organisation from a gender perspective (which the current study had neither the resources nor access to do). Without such a fundamental awareness and understanding, ad-hoc or piecemeal approaches and initiatives will be taken, targeted at individual aspects which – absent a broader framework – are going to have a limited impact. For example, efforts to recruit women into policing, without having in place the facilities and policies that both accord them equality and address their particular needs while in service; or a failure to understand and acknowledge the dynamics at play that prevent female officers from progressing into senior positions, are going to have ramifications for women throughout the organisation.

The main recommendation is that resources are identified and deployed to conduct a full and independent gender audit of the Maldives Police Service and develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan to address the issues in a holistic rather than piecemeal manner. It is clear also that gender awareness, equality and sensitisation training is required at all levels of the organisation to target what are clearly deeply-held and engrained attitudes in respect of gender.

With its admittedly limited access, this research has identified the following problems which any gender analysis might want to look at (as well as any others that might arise):

- The attitudes and misunderstandings manifested in the difference of views and experiences between men and women officers in relation to key gender-based issues, so that they can be confronted and addressed.

- A culture of male dominance, superiority and discrimination evidenced both in the experiences contributed by women to this research and the opinions expressed by some of the men.
- The need to examine the current application and recruitment process to identify and tackle the obstacles that exist (some of which are currently acknowledged but addressed only in an informal or discretionary manner).
- How to seriously address the problem of harassment and the apparent mismatch between the occurrence of harassment and the extent of it as expressed by women officers on the one hand, and the lack of use of the mechanism for redress and the reasons for this on the other.
- The failure to address and provide in any meaningful or holistic way the policies and facilities that are required to address the needs of women officers and enable their full and equal participation in the police service.
- The severe under-representation of women officers at operational levels which needs to improve to influence and change public perceptions, increase confidence in women police officers and allow them to contribute as equals.
- The inaccessibility of in-service training to women officers and an examination of the obstacles and reasons why the quotas that have been set for this are not being met.
- The extent of the problem of retention of women officers and an analysis of reasons for departure.
- The chronic under-representation of women officers in senior positions, why fast-track mechanisms are not working and the attitudes and culture underpinning this.

To conclude, the young Maldives Police Service has great potential to become a leading light in the region, and even internationally, in relation to the participation and experience of women in its ranks. There is evidence of the will and commitment to make this happen at a senior level; the challenge is to turn that will into meaningful and effective action so that good intentions are matched with good outcomes.

Recommendations

For the Government

1. Introduce a law on sexual harassment:
 - That adopts a zero tolerance approach with suitable punishment
 - That ensures appropriate mechanisms for implementation, including with appropriate gender balance
 - Imposes sanctions for non-compliance
 - Includes provisions prohibiting victimisation of complainants.
2. Provide adequate resources to the Maldives Police Service to enable it to carry out required police infrastructural upgrading across islands to ensure women police can be deployed there, such as:
 - Transport or other means of safe mobility for women officers within and between islands
 - Day care facilities
 - Female toilets in existing as well as new-build police stations
 - Separate barracks for women.
3. Provide additional resources to the Maldives Police Service to implement recommendations emerging from the proposed gender audit and strategy.

For the Maldives Police Service

1. At a strategic level:
 - Commission a full and independent gender audit
 - Use it to develop a comprehensive gender equality strategy
 - From this develop action plans to implement the strategy that include timetables, targets and monitoring and oversight mechanisms
 - Ensure women are involved in this process at every level.

Below are suggestions, areas and recommendations which the gender audit and policy could address:

2. On recruitment:
 - A recruitment policy with annual targets to increase the number of women
 - A change in application criteria, especially physical requirements
 - Review the application and recruitment process to determine what is necessary and reasonable at that stage and what could be moved into training
 - A support process to assist potential women applicants
 - Formally adopt the practice of targeting and deploying women in the islands to encourage applications
 - Carry out sustained campaigns of awareness on policing as a career option; use of role models; and advertising and information on recruitment across all the islands
 - Ensure selection processes, interview panels etc have women present at all stages.
3. On facilities and policies:
 - Embark on a government-resourced infrastructural programme to ensure that there are adequate facilities such as toilets, restrooms, etc available in every existing police station to meet the needs of women deployed there
 - Introduce day care, flexible working and other policies that will benefit all police officers but particularly enable women to more effectively manage home responsibilities
 - Provide transport or other means of safe mobility within and between islands for female officers.
4. On training:
 - Improve opportunities for women police officers in service to avail of training and take positive actions to fill the existing reservation of places, such as providing day care or other family support; provide the training across the islands; consider staggering courses or providing online/distance learning
 - Ensure there are women trainers in the training institute and other mentors for women officers
 - Ensure there is suitable, safe and available accommodation for women at training centres.
5. On culture:
 - Provide compulsory gender equality and sensitisation training at all levels of the police service
 - Include women (perhaps through setting quotas) in policy and decision-making bodies and processes.
6. On harassment:
 - Set up an external and independent complaints investigation mechanism for harassment

- Ensure there are women involved in this and that there is accurate recording and reporting
 - Introduce a zero tolerance policy and code of conduct with disciplinary consequences for harassment
 - Establish a support network for victims of harassment, whether through a women's police association or elsewhere
 - Introduce a victimisation policy.
7. On deployment and allocation of duties:
- Ensure the facilities and policies exist to enable women to take up operational posts
 - Take proactive measures to ensure women serve on the frontline and are more visible in policing such as examine and address factors behind the low number of women police across the islands
 - Target women for support and capacity building to take on other roles
 - Provide career guidance and support so other opportunities and pathways for women officers can be identified
 - Check and change policy/practice of deploying or assigning work first to men.
8. On retention:
- Start gathering figures and other detailed information on retention to ascertain the nature of the problem.
 - Conduct exit interviews to establish reasons for leaving and gather feedback on what might have been done about it.
9. On promotion:
- Provide female officers with the necessary training opportunities, experience, exposure, and skills to enable them to progress in the organisation
 - Look at why the existing fast-track mechanism is not working and particularly review the role of attitudes and culture to the problem.
10. Commit resources to the delivery of all of this.

For UNDP/UN Women

1. Participate in the planning process for developing a gender policy and draw from international best practice to suggest measures for promoting women police.

For the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives

1. Review police laws, regulations and any other departmental orders to add/strengthen provisions to promote gender equality and protection of women's rights in the police organisation.

PAKISTAN



SECTION 1

Overview of Police Organisation

Background and Context

The policing system in Pakistan inherited from the former British colonial system, as in India and Bangladesh, continues to function as a colonial force. Policing is still governed primarily by the Police Act of 1861 and its non-democratic ethos.

The police in Pakistan are approximately 426,000 strong, for a population of 182 million people. The police-population ratio is within the UN minimum level of 1:500.

Pakistan is a federal parliamentary republic comprising four provinces and four federal territories.²⁰⁹ Each of these administrative units controls its own police service (except the Federally Administered Tribal Areas – FATA). The policing set-up in each province is generally identical and is concerned primarily with maintaining order, and preventing and detecting crime. In addition, the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP) is a federal civil service department that recruits, trains, manages and allocates the bulk of senior officers to the provincial police departments. While this ensures that police leadership throughout Pakistan emerges from the same training and recruitment background, there is a disconnect between the senior police leadership and junior ranks (which are drawn from provincial police services), with perceived difficulties for those proceeding through provincial ranks to be able to access senior command positions.

The police departments are:

- Capital Police in Islamabad
- Punjab Police
- Sindh Police
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police (KPK)
- Balochistan Police
- Gilgit Baltistan Police
- Azad Jammu Kashmir Police (AJK)
- Pakistan Railway Police
- National Highway and Motorway Police (NH&MP)
- Islamabad Traffic Police
- Rangers
- Elite Force and Anti-Terrorism Squad
- Frontier Constabulary

The rank structure in the police is:

- Constable
- Head Constable
- Assistant Sub-Inspector
- Sub-Inspector
- Inspector
- Assistant/Deputy Superintendent
- Superintendent
- Senior Superintendent
- Deputy Inspector General
- Additional Inspector General
- Inspector General of Police

²⁰⁹ Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Islamabad Capital Territory, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Nationwide, standards are set for the police by the National Police Bureau which is assigned the task of coordinating with all the provincial police outfits, initiating measures to improve performance and providing the necessary resources to the police.

Attempts at legal and systemic reform have been made over the years, most notably through the Police Order, 2002, introduced by General Musharraf, which attempted to democratise policing and mandated the police to be “professional, service-oriented and accountable to the people”. The Order was promulgated in August 2002 and replaced the Police Act of 1861. It originally put in place mechanisms and processes designed to limit political interference in police functioning and to ensure accountability for performance and misconduct. However, due to a backlash from the provinces, the bureaucracy and certain segments of the policing community, the reforms passed in 2002 were significantly curtailed by amendments passed between 2004 and 2007. Over a period of four years, eight ordinances were promulgated to introduce scores of substantive and hundreds of minor amendments to the original Police Order. Most notably, the Police Order (Amendment) Ordinance, 2004, amended or replaced 73 of the 187 articles in the original Police Order, 2002. The amendments caused considerable confusion which persists. Subsequently, Sindh and Balochistan introduced laws repealing the Order and reinstating the Police Act, 1861. The Order lapsed in 2010 owing to constitutional complexities. Thus, swathes of policing in Pakistan continue to be administered under a 150-year-old policing law and system. Due to the failures of reform, the situation of women police and efforts towards gender equality within the police continue to be sorely neglected.

The Numbers and Representation of Women in Policing

Historically, dating back to the British Raj, recruitment of women into policing in Pakistan was rare, and their induction into policing since has been exceedingly slow. Women were first brought into the police in 1939 to deal with women agitators in a farmers’ movement in Punjab. From seven temporary women Constables and a Head Constable at that time, the numbers rose to 25 Constables, two Head Constables and an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) recruited in 1952, about 13 years later.

Change dawned in 1994, when former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto established the first ever women-only police station in Rawalpindi. According to the then Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Rawalpindi Range, Dr Muhammad Shoaib Suddle, the need for an exclusive police station was a response to increasing incidents and complaints of police excesses by male police against women suspects who were arrested and under investigation. It was decided that the women’s police station would deal with all cases in that range involving women. The women staff included an Inspector, two Sub-Inspectors, one Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), two Head Constables and 13 Constables. The Bhutto administration went on to create women-only police stations in Abbotabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Karachi and Larkana. However, the intention to do so in every city of Pakistan was never realised because the government was dismissed in November 1996.²¹⁰

Since then, although there have been attempts to recruit more women into the police department, in addition to establishing women’s police stations, the estimated number of women police is less than 1 per cent. Figures compiled by the National Police Bureau in 2012 and published on the website of the nascent Women Police Network in Pakistan, state that out of a total police strength of 425,978, only 4,020 are women.²¹¹

210 CHRI and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2010), *Police Organisations in Pakistan*, Women in Police, p. 31: http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/police/police_organisations_in_pakistan.pdf.

211 Women Police Network, *Empowering Women Police of Pakistan*: <http://wvnpakistan.org/>. This website was launched as part of the Gender Responsive Policing Project collaboration between the German Development Cooperation Organization (GIZ) and the National Police Bureau.

A series of tables follow with figures on women police across police organisations in Pakistan.

Table 13: Representation of Women Police in Pakistan

Sr.	Police Organization	Total Existing Strength (Men & Women)	Women Police	% of Women Police
1	Punjab	1,49,719	1,798	1.2
2	Sindh	1,47,782	902	0.61
3	KPK	60,478	438	0.72
4	Balochistan	32,937	103	0.31
5	Islamabad	9,980	155	1.55
6	Gilgit Baltistan	5,412	163	3.01
7	AJK	7,462	70	0.93
8	Railway	6,590	113	1.71
9	NH&MP (Uniformed)	4,070	128	3.14
10	FIA (Uniformed)	1,548	150	9.68
Total		4,25,978	4,020	0.94

The table²¹² above shows that Balochistan lags behind in the number of women police deployed, which is less than one-third of 1 per cent. This is not surprising, as Balochistan is traditionally conservative which poses difficulties for women to consider joining the police. On the other hand, the Federal Intelligence Agency (FIA) stands at the top with almost 10 per cent of women police.

The more detailed statistics provided below, although unofficial, are mainly compiled from official sources.²¹³

Table 14: National Highway and Motorway Police (2011-2012)

Rank	Number
Senior Patrolling Officer/Inspector	25
Patrolling Officer/Sub-Inspector	31
Assistant Patrolling Officer/Head Constable	17
Junior Patrolling Officer/Constable	57
Total	130

Table 15: Pakistan Railway Police (2011-2012)

Divisions Ranks	Lahore	Quetta	Rawalpindi	Sukkur	Multan	(W) Mughalpura	Karachi	Peshawar	Total
Head Constable	39	2	22	6	15	4	13	7	108
Constable	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	4

212 Women Police Network, *Empowering Women Police of Pakistan, number of women police*: <http://wpnpakistan.org/number-of-women-police.php>.

213 Unless otherwise stated, these cover the time period November 2011 to November 2012 and were gathered by Individualland via information requests to police departments, the National Police Bureau (NPB) and the Interior Ministry, as well as through visits they conducted to various facilities where they were able to ascertain the number of women police on active duty. It is worth noting here that the NPB gathered these statistics as it has made them available through the Gender Responsive Policing Project it is engaged in with GIZ. However, in terms of its engagement with the IL research, it did hold meetings with the team and discussed possible collaboration, but thereafter was reluctant to share any information on strength of women personnel.

Pakistan Railway Police (Data Shared on 31 March 2015)	
Rank	Number
Assistant Sub-Inspector	2
Upper division Clerk	2
Lower Division Clerk	2
Head Constable	7
Constable	146
Total	159

Table 16: Women Assistant Superintendent Police Officers in Pakistan²¹⁴

Lady Officer Names	Domicile
Ms. Helena Rizwan Tareen	Baluchistan
Ms. Maria Mahmood	Punjab
Ms. Amara Athar	Punjab
Ms. Shaista Rehman	Punjab
Dr. Nida Riaz Chatha	Punjab
Syeda Zahida Bukhari	KPK
Ms. Riffat Haider Bukhari	Punjab
Ms. Irum Abbasi	KPK
Ms. Irum Awan	Sindh (R)
Ms. Saba Sattar	Punjab
Ms. Sumera Azam	Punjab
Ms. Shahla	Sindh (U)
Dr. Anoosh Masood Ch.	Punjab
Ms. Arsla Salim	Punjab
Ms. Zunera Noor	Punjab
Ms. Shazia Sarwer	Balochistan
Ms. Javaria Muhammad Jamil	Punjab
Ms. Ambreen Ali	Gilgit
Ms. Sonia Shamroz Khan	KPK

In the Airport Security Force (ASF) more than 601 women are working in various ranks, according to the information shared by Director General ASF Mr Khalid Shafi.

In Islamabad, in previous data shared in 2011-12, there were a total of 152 women's police officers working in one (01) women police station and two (02) women police cells within the Islamabad Police. Data shared on 25th March 2015 across the ranks shows a definite increase:

²¹⁴ National Police Academy, Training, ASsP course, accessed online from: http://www.npa.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=161&Itemid=550

Table 17: Islamabad (Data Shared on 25 March 2015)

Rank	Number
Sub-Inspector	1
ASIs	10
Head Constables	26
Constables	157
Total	194

Table 18: Sindh (2011-2012)

Division	Districts									Total
Karachi	Women at Police Station	CPO Office	DIG South Zone	DIG East Zone	DIG West Zone	DIG Traffic				254
	41	6	80	65	41	21				
71 as per data shared during visit										
Hyderabad	Hyderabad	Dadu	Thatta	Badin	Nawabshah	Tando Muhammad Khan	Tando Allah Yar	Matyari	Jamshoro	203
	39	12	23	43	31	10	23	16	6	
Sukkur	Sukkur	Ghotki	Khairpur		Nowsheroferoze					106
	28	1	37		40					
Mirpurkhas	Mirpurkhas	Umerkot		Sangar	Tharparkar					82
	40	7		29	6					
Larkana	Larkana	Shikarpur		Kamber and Shahdadkot	Jaccobabad	Kashmore				78
	42	6		11	14	5				
Total										753

Table 19: Mirpurkhas Range (2011-2012)

Rank	Districts			
	Mirpurkhas	Sanghar	Umerkot	Tharparkar
Inspector	1	-	-	-
Sub-Inspector	-	1	-	-
Assistant Sub-Inspector	4	3	-	-
Head Constable	-	-	-	-
Lady Constable	28	17	7	6
Recruit Lady Constable	8	8	-	-
Total	40	29	7	6

Table 20: Larkana Range (2011-2012)

Rank	Districts				
	Larkana	Kamber	Shikarpur	Jacobabad	Kashmore
Inspector	1	-	-	-	-
Sub-Inspector	8	-	-	1	-
Assistant Sub-Inspector	10	-	1	1	-
Head Constable	4	3	2	3	1
Lady Constable	19	8	3	9	4
Total	42	11	6	14	5

Table 21: Sukkur Range (2011-2012)

Rank	Districts			
	Sukkur	Ghotki	Khairpur	Nowsheroferoze
Assistant Superintendent of Police	1 as per information shared during visit			
Sub-Inspector	2	-	1	-
Assistant Sub-Inspector	1	1	4	3
Head Constable	4	-	-	-
Lady Constable	21	-	32	37
Total	29	1	37	40

Table 22: Hyderabad Range

Rank	Districts								
	Hyderabad	Matiari	Tando Muhammad Khan	Tando Allah Yar	Dadu	Jamshoro	Thatta	Badin	Shaheed-Benazirabad
Sub-Inspector	15	-	-	3	2	-	-	1	1
Assistant Sub-Inspector	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Head Constable	11	-	3	2	5	2	2	4	5
Lady Constable	10	16	7	18	4	4	21	38	22
Total	39	16	10	23	12	6	23	43	31

Table 23: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Sanctioned Strength

Districts	Deputy Superintendent Police	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Assistant Sub-Inspector	Head Constable	Constable	Total
CCPO Peshawar	1	1	6	7	7	85	107
Presently Working in Peshawar (2011-2012)	-	1	2	6	6	89	104
DPO Nowshera	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
DPO Mardan	-	-	1	2	4	48	55
DPO Kohat	-	-	1	2	4	18	25
DPO Bannu	-	-	-	-	1	8	9
DPO D.I. Khan	-	-	1	3	4	20	28
DPO Swat	-	-	-	1	1	5	7
DPO Dir Lower	-	-	-	-	1	5	6
DPO Chitral	-	-	-	-	1	4	5
DPO Abbottabad	-	-	1	3	4	31	39
Presently Working in Abbottabad (2011-2012)	-	1	-	-	4	28	33
DPO Mansehra	-	-	-	-	1	5	6
Total (according to 2011-2012 data)	1	1	10	18	29	231	290
Total (data shared on 2 April 2015)²¹⁵	7	4	2	5	17	427	462

²¹⁵ According to information shared by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Nazia Noureen with IL in a telephone conversation on 2 April 2015.

Table 24: Punjab

Divisions	Districts						Total
Lahore	-						-
Bahawalpur	Bahawalpur	Bahawalnagar		Rahimyar Khan			102
	26	35		41			
D.G. Khan	Dera Ghazi Khan	Muzaffargarh	Rajanpur		Layyah		-
	-	-	-		-		
Faisalabad	Faisalabad	Jhang	Toba Tek Singh		Chiniot		37
	37	-	-		-		
Gujranwala	Gujranwala	Sialkot	Gujrat	Narowal	Mandi Bahauddin	Hafizabad	33
	-	33	-	-	-	-	
Multan	Multan	Vehari	Khanewal		Lodhran		186
	105	31	26		24		
Rawalpindi	Rawalpindi	Attock	Chakwal		Jhelum		125
	125	-	-		-		
Sahiwal	Sahiwal		Pakpattan		Okara		
	-		-		-		-
Sargodha	Sargodha	Khushab	Mianwali		Bhakkar		-
	-	-	-		-		
Sheikhupura	Sheikhupura		Nankana Sahib		Kasur		-
	-		-		-		
Total							483

Table 25: Rawalpindi District

	Assistant Superintendent Police	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Assistant Sub-Inspector	Head Constable	Constable	Total
Present Numbers	1	1	6	3	4	110	125

Table 26: Gilgit-Baltistan (2011-2012)

Districts							Total
Ghanche	Skardu	Astore	Hunza/Nagar	Diamer	Ghizer	Gilgit	160
14	31	08	13	14	19	61	

Table 27: Balochistan

Sanctioned and Present Strength

Divisions		Districts				Total
Quetta	Quetta					123
	123					
Loralai	Loralai					4
	4					
Sibi	Sibi	Kachhi	JhalMagsi	Naseerabad	Jaffarabad	12
	4	1	1	1	5	
Khuzdar	Khuzdar	Kalat		Lasbela		18
	3	3		12		
Gawadar	Gawadar	Panjgur		Kech		8
	5	2		1		
Total						165
Present Strength						103

Ranks	Deputy Superintendent Police	Inspector	Assistant Sub-Inspector	Head Constable	Constable	Total
Sanctioned	1	3	4	19	138	165
Present	1	1	3	14	84	103
Vacancies	0	2	1	5	54	62

Table 28: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Sanctioned strength of women police across the rank as on 19 February 2015						
	Inspector	Sub-Inspector	Assistant Sub-Inspector	Head Constable	Constable	Total
Total Posts	1	6	6	7	80	100
CPO	1	-	-	-	1	2
Muzaffarabad	-	2	-	1	15	18
Neelum	-	1	-	1	3	5
Hattian Bala	-	-	-	-	1	1
Rawalakot	-	2	-	1	9	12
Bagh	-	-	1	1	8	10
Havalli (Kahutta)	-	-	-	-	1	1
Sudhnoti	-	-	1	-	6	7
Mirpur	-	-	2	1	17	20
Kotli	-	1	1	1	12	15
Bhimber	-	-	1	1	7	9

The challenge to just increase the numbers of women is clearly immense in Pakistan. Encouraging and recruiting women into the police is all the more challenging in a country of frequent conflagrations that come with sudden intensity from diverse quarters.

SECTION 2

Legal and Policy Framework

The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 provides for equality between citizens, and specifically for women.

- Article 25:** Protects against discrimination on the grounds of sex and enables the State to make special provision for the protection of women and children.
- Article 27:** Prohibits discrimination against any citizen qualified for appointment “in the service of Pakistan” on the grounds of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth.
- Article 34:** Steps to be taken to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of national life.

These provisions need to be read and understood in light of the Islamic context of the Constitution. Pakistan has signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and is thus bound by its obligations. However, a declaration was entered upon ratification in 1996 that it is subject to the provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan.²¹⁶

Strengthened Protection of Women through the Law

Regarding the broader legal and policy framework concerning women in Pakistan, several recent developments have occurred to advance protection for the rights of women. The first is the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010²¹⁷ whereby processes and structures are to be established to report and investigate allegations of harassment of women at the workplace, including in the police. The second is the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2012 which is an effort to recognise domestic violence as a criminal and punishable offence.²¹⁸

The legal framework that governs the police broadly comprises of police-related laws and subordinate legislation that have the force or effect of law, such as rules, by-laws, procedures and standing orders. This legal framework is largely outdated and remains problematic, especially from a gender perspective. Apart from the attempted Police Order, 2002, little has been done to comprehensively review, update or improve other relevant laws or subordinate legislation. Despite some progressive provisions, the Police Order, 2002 remained flawed and inadequate from the perspective of women. It lacks women-specific provisions that could have been part of the Order, such as, fixing a minimum proportion for women’s representation, improving working conditions for women, and introducing policies for women police. Positive changes have occurred in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) for women police. In KP, women police reforms occurred with the establishment of women’s desks at mainstream police stations.²¹⁹ Seven women police officers were promoted to the rank of Deputy

216 UN Women, Declarations, Reservations and Objections to CEDAW, see: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations-country.htm>.

217 The *Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act*, 11 March 2010, <http://www.qau.edu.pk/pdfs/ha.pdf>.

218 *Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act*, 20 February 2012, <http://www.lawyerscollective.org/files/DV%20act--%20As%20passed%20by%20Senate.pdf>.

219 Zahir Shah Sherazi (2014), “Women desks to be set up at all 500 KP police stations”, *Dawn*, 21 April 2014: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1101348>.

Superintendent of Police.²²⁰ Moreover, women were recruited to the Elite Police Force Department in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.²²¹

Various laws in Pakistan also *require* women police to be present: searching of women offenders and suspects must be conducted by women police (or by another woman in the absence of a woman police); women offenders must be placed in the custody of women police. The police cannot detain a woman in a male police station's lockup. Theoretically, during search raids, police cannot enter a house without the presence of women police, though it often happens that raids take place without women officers, yet their presence is noted in forms filled out later which is a patent illegality if true. These legal imperatives make it all the more urgent to increase the number of women in policing in Pakistan.

Significant Policy Initiatives

On a positive note, there have been strong policy initiatives to open the debate and set a momentum on working toward gender equality in policing by focusing on the conditions of women in the police. The most extensive is the Gender Responsive Policing Project by a donor agency, GIZ (German Development Cooperation), and the National Police Bureau of Pakistan. This project has taken tremendous strides towards laying down minimum standards and a policy framework for the inclusion of women in policing. This project conducted a gender audit of police organisations to benchmark the gender sensitivity of police organisations from 2009-12; it held national and provincial level consultations with police personnel, and finally drafted and published a Gender Strategy for police. It regularly holds international and national conferences on gender responsive policing. It also facilitated the establishment of a Women's Police Network, which aims to:

*“Empower women police, ensuring enhanced policing services for women seeking police assistance. WPN provides networking and learning opportunities to women police encouraging their active role in mainstream policing facilitating gender-sensitive policing practices, especially for gender-based crimes”.*²²²

This Network has a website which builds profiles of women in policing and for the first time puts considerable information and statistics about them into the public domain.

220 Kashif Aziz (2014), “*Badge of Honour*”, *Dawn*, 20 October 2014: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1138366>; and Riaz Ahmad (2015), “*25 inspectors promoted as DSPs*”, *Tribune*, 2 April 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/863270/25-inspectors-promoted-as-dsps/>.

221 _ (2015), “*KP Female Elite Force undergo training*”, *The News*, 11 February 2015, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-174762-KP-Female-Elite-Force-undergo-training->.

222 Women Police Network, <http://wpnpakistan.org/>.

The Gender Strategy for Police (2012-2016)

The Gender Strategy is a comprehensive road map to achieve gender equality for the police organisations of Pakistan.²²³ The goal of the policy is to “cultivate gender-sensitive thinking and practice across organisational processes and operational services to foster inclusive participation and gender-just access to policing”. It sets out several strategic priorities, under which specific actions are listed to propel police organisations to implement gender responsive plans of action. While it is too lengthy to have a section on its own in this chapter, the findings and recommendations of the Gender Strategy are very relevant here and interspersed throughout.

The Overall Objectives of the Strategy are:

- Policy support: Inspire leadership support and commitment to an equality perspective in organisational matters and policing procedures.
- Work environment: Build an inclusive organisational environment to motivate women and men to participate fully, progress equally and act responsibly.
- Policing services: Improve policing services to facilitate survivors of violence against women and respond sensitively to gender-specific protection needs of citizens.

Strategic Priorities:

- Improve the representation of women in the police.
- Develop capacities and competencies in women police.
- Enhance the roles, positioning and visibility of women police.
- Cultivate a gender-sensitive work environment.
- Assimilate gender learning into police training.
- Enrich policing services with a gender equality perspective.

²²³ GIZ (2012), *Gender Strategy of Police 2012-2016: Equality in Perspective*: <http://www.wpn-pakistan.org/Publications/GenderStrategy.pdf>

SECTION 3

Experiences and Challenges

Attitude of the Public

Most of the women police officers interviewed commented on the challenges they faced in a male-dominated society, where attitudes to women in employment are generally challenging, but become even more acute in what is viewed as a difficult job that is best suited to men.

Comments included:

“Society considers this a bold job and odd for women”.

“Society does not consider policing as a respectable job especially for women”.

Many interviewees spoke of the challenges and opposition they faced within their communities:

“People stare at women and do not consider it a respectful profession for them”.

“The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) do not like women working, especially when we are working with men”.

“The reaction from my society was not good; many people were against my job”.

“The Hazara²²⁴ tribe does not approve of a police job for women”.

“People stared at me all the time when I started in this job. They could not believe that a woman was working in the police”.

For a conservative society, it is not surprising that there was negative feedback, but in testament to the fact that it is also a society evolving, some positive signs emerged. A retired woman SSP said in an interview that some women might have faced family pressure when joining the police, but there were also those who were encouraged by their families and motivated to see women police on duty:

*“There is need to increase the number of women in the Police Department but that is only possible when there is acceptance of women police in our society. To change such negative mind sets there should not only be awareness at the departmental level but also in society”.*²²⁵

In another instance, a woman DSP took great strides to keep her job in the police. She was the only woman officer recruited in the Balochistan Police, but was not supported by her family. When she was threatened by her brothers, she herself apprehended and arrested them and they ended up in jail.

Research by Individualland (IL) shows that men and women feel that in theory, it is good to increase the number of women in policing (80%). However, the majority then balks at having their sisters or daughters join (53%). Almost

²²⁴ The Hazara are a tribal community originally from Afghanistan, but have moved in some numbers to Pakistan for a variety of reasons including persecution. In Pakistan, they are settled in the city of Quetta.

²²⁵ Five talk shows hosted by the Individualland team in Lok Virsa Islamabad in October 2014 in which women police personnel were the guests.

universally (87%), a male officer is seen as a symbol of authority, and very few (13%) see women police officers in the same mould. Most (61%) are much more comfortable with limiting women's role to "women's issues" such as handling crimes specific to women or handling women offenders.²²⁶ These generally-held attitudes are grounded in the public's traditional understanding of police personnel as being predominantly involved in keeping public order and facing dangerous criminals. They do not consider that, even if stereotyping is adhered to, policing work requires recourse to intelligent investigation, building community relations and managing and administering a large organisation, all of which can be handled by women as much as by men.

There have also been specific examples of negative public backlash, such as in Lahore where 140 female traffic wardens no longer work on the roads but rather carry out office duties after facing various forms of harassment while on public duty.²²⁷

On the positive side, many women officers spoke of how, with time, opposition within the wider community had diminished and people became used to seeing them and accepted them. So a sense was emerging that the more women were seen doing the job, attitudes improved and acceptance increased. This emphasises the importance of more women joining the police and being visible to the public. It can break stereotypes and prejudices about the police service being a suitable profession for women and about women's ability to perform the job.

Recruitment Processes

The police take in fresh recruits at the ranks of Assistant Superintendent of Police, Assistant Sub-Inspector and Constable. The Assistant Superintendent is selected through the Federal Public Service Commission and Assistant Sub-Inspector, through the Provincial Public Service Commission. The Constable is the lowest rank in the police department and is recruited through a board headed by the rank of Inspector General of Police.²²⁸

Recruitment processes to the police in Pakistan involve minimum education qualifications, physical standards and physical fitness requirements. Information on all the recruitment processes for all the different police entities was not available during the course of this research to enable a proper analysis. However, for women, it is clear there are varying practices across police departments, with some relaxing rules on physical standards, and others not.

226 According to research by IL involving attitudinal surveys with members of the public in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and Gilgit-Baltistan; Individualland (2012), *Public Perception of Women Police in Pakistan*, Individualland: http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rokdownloads&view=file&Itemid=171.

227 Karamat Bhatti, (2012) "Workplace harassment: Female wardens fade from view in chauvinistic Lahore", *The Express Tribune*, 19 February 2012: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/338498/workplace-harassment-female-wardens-fade-from-view-in-chauvinist-lahore/> A talk show hosted by Advocate Humaira Mashiuddin recounted a report by women police that before the October 2005 earthquake, women traffic police worked in Islamabad. After the earthquake, people would stop their cars to tell them that their un-Islamic behavior of wearing trousers and generally being on the road was responsible for God's wrath being unleashed in the form of the earthquake

228 For an example, see the webpage on recruitment of the Punjab Police department: <http://punjabpolice.gov.pk/recruitment>.

Snapshot of Criteria and Qualifications for Recruitment

Islamabad: For the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector the requirements are a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, and for Constables, it is matriculation, with an age limit of 18 to 26 years. The applicants must have a minimum height of 5 feet 8 inches while for women it is 5 feet 2 inches.²²⁹

Punjab: For Punjab Police Constables and woman Constables, the education criteria is matriculation or its equivalent. For the rank of Constable it is mandatory for the applicants to attempt the written test through the National Testing Service (NTS). The minimum height for men is 5 feet 7 inches while for women it is 5 feet 2 inches and exemption of chest measurements.²³⁰

Sindh: The recruitment of Constables in Sindh Police requires a maximum age limit of 28 years. All applicants - men and women - with a minimum matriculation or equivalent education are eligible. The minimum height for men is 5 feet 5 inches while for women it is 5 feet and exemption of chest measurements.²³¹

National Highways and Motorways Police: Criteria for recruitment is based on physical examination, written test, interview and driving expertise. For the ranks of Senior Patrolling Officer and Patrolling Officer, qualifications are graduation with at least a second division and a driving license. Applicants for the ranks of Assistant Patrolling Officer and Junior Patrolling Officer must hold a driving license and have three years of driving experience. An Intermediate degree is the required qualification for Assistant Patrolling Officer, and for Junior Patrolling Officer it is matriculation. The minimum height for men is 5 feet 8 inches while for women it is 5 feet 4 inches. The chest measurements are exempted for women applicants.²³²

A quota of 10 per cent is reserved for employment of women police officers. This was put in place by the government at the federal level, which also binds provinces.²³³ More concerning however is that despite the existence of quotas, there have been no significant or notable proactive efforts to enable them to be filled. Given both the massive under-representation that has to be addressed, and the significant negative cultural and public attitudes and challenges faced by women in the police in Pakistan, it is doubtful that sufficient numbers of women will come forward on their own to address the gap.

This finding is reinforced in studies carried out for the Gender Strategy:

*“Despite introduction of 10% employment quota for women by the federal government, adherence to the policy varies across the police organisations and the pace of inclusion of women is slow. There are issues of lack of proper planning and implementation of the quota policy. Nowhere a policy of 10 per cent quota is being followed and it varies between 2-5 per cent.”*²³⁴

Since the Gender Strategy was published, some changes may have been instituted in quotas set. For instance, it may be that Islamabad police operates a 10% quota, while Punjab reserves 15%.

229 As no other official source is publicly available, all of these criteria and qualifications for recruitment have been collected from advertisements for recruitment to the police. See ad for recruitment to Islamabad Police: <http://ilm.com.pk/jobs-career/islamabad-police-assistant-sub-inspector-and-constable-jobs-2013-for-male-female/>.

230 See ad (not available in English): <http://sekho.com.pk/jobs/punjab-police-constable-lady-constable-jobs-nts-test-date-roll-no-slips-selected-candidates/>.

231 See ad (not available in English): <http://www.jobinpk.com/constable-bs-05-job-sindh-police-job-2015-male-and-female-constable-job-in-sindh-police/>.

232 See ad: <http://www.studysols.com/join-as-officer-in-motorway-police-pakistan-si-inspector-asi-dsp-asp-sp-ssp-dig-igp>.

233 The official government notification is not available, but advertisements in various cities mention the 10% quota.

234 GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, 2012-16, p. 18.

Despite an overall policy of 10% reservations in government departments at the federal level, a lack of strong and specific action points and performance measurements mean that implementation is at best patchy and at worst non-existent. In countries where reservations have been effective, policy goes hand in hand with practical initiatives such as publicity, awareness, outreach and support. In Pakistan, across the board there are no more than 2% to 5% of women in government service, and in the police 1%. In many places, the quota system is seen in practice, as precluding women from being recruited in the general category. This actually restricts women's entry point as less slots may be available through the quota, and it also prevents a woman candidate's consideration on merit. In fact, some police departments are doing away with it as policy,

"A misconception prevails with regard to the employment of women on quota/reserved seats viz-à-viz open merit-based recruitment. In the presence of quota, women are not considered on general/open merit seats. Considering the quota as a restrictive measure for women to join police, the Sindh police has passed an order for recruitment of constables on an open merit basis. They have abandoned the quota policy".²³⁵

It appears that a balanced, middle ground approach is most needed. As Individualland recommended in 2012, police departments *"should take measures to not only accommodate women on quota seats, but also encourage them to apply on merit"*.²³⁶ Clearly, while quotas can be effective to help women gain entry, other enabling measures also need to be taken in order to truly mainstream women into policing.

Elsewhere, social conditions hold back the best of intentions. In one of the few examples of proactivity, in Balochistan, 53 posts for women police officers were advertised in spite of a general freeze on recruitment. However, only three women applied. In a country where the context for women is already challenging, to advertise positions for women police, and bemoan the fact that women don't apply, when no efforts are made to address the reasons why women don't apply or to reach out to assist them in doing so, appears futile.

Systemically, there is a lack of a proper, effective, and professional recruitment process into the police, affecting both men and women. This foundational aspect needs the most urgent attention, in tandem with policies that can make the recruitment process gender-friendly and facilitative of women. The Gender Strategy of Police concludes that:

"A lack of standardised recruitment process, absence of gender-sensitive criterion and lack of women's representation in selection committees are considered barriers to achieving a systematic process of recruitment".²³⁷

The Gender Strategy provides no less than fifteen specific action points on how to strengthen recruitment processes for women, providing a ready blueprint.

Male Culture within the Police Service

The predominance of men and a male culture within the police services is not specific to Pakistan. However, given the exceptionally low number of women police in Pakistan, and the broader cultural context, there are significant challenges.

²³⁵ GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, 2012-16, p. 18.

²³⁶ IL (2012), *Women Police in Pakistan*, p. 28: http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rokdownloads&view=file&task=download&id=21%3Awomen-police-in-pakistan&Itemid=170.

²³⁷ GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, 2012-16 p. 18.

A disconnect between a stated desire to have more women involved in policing, and the reality that entails is evident.²³⁸ For example, as found in IL's 2012 study, most male police officers (84%) thought that women should join the police, with 79% being of the view that there was a need to increase the number of women in the police. However, only 46% would encourage a female member of the family to join the service. While the majority (approximately 75%) of respondents did not declare an unwillingness to work alongside or even under women officers, a considerable number (almost 25%) expressed reservations. About 59% of those surveyed had worked alongside women police, which may explain the more positive attitudes displayed. This again highlights the importance of more women joining the service to change cultural and stereotypical attitudes. Indeed, one senior officer highlighted how the presence of a woman officer had positively influenced the behaviour of her male colleagues. A retired SSP and SP who both served in the Karachi traffic police shared in an interview that while many officers thought that people would assemble around the women police on the roads, this was not the case. Strict adherence to the rules by women police was actually a reason why drivers preferred to be handled by male officers.

Harassment at the Workplace

Sexual harassment at the workplace is an inhibiting factor to the integration of women into the mainstream of their chosen careers. It is well known that the very possibility of this, while working closely in an essentially male-dominated environment prevents women breaking free of family and societal objections to working in the police, as is the case in Pakistan. In interviews, just one person mentioned harassment at the workplace. During the surveys in 2013, 17% of respondents spoke about harassment, and only about half of these had the courage to complain. Of those who complained, only 29% said that the authorities redressed their complaints. Of the half who did not complain, 41% feared reprisals, 41% faced non-cooperation by superiors, and for 18% there were no mechanisms in place to complain.

These figures alone paint a sorry picture of the state of implementation of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, three years after its enactment.

This Act for the first time defines sexual harassment in law, and requires all employers, including the police, to establish internal inquiry processes to deal with allegations of harassment.

As per Section 2(h) of the Act, *“harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors or other verbal or written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature or sexually demeaning attitudes, causing interference with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, or the attempt to punish the complainant for refusal to comply to such a request or is made a condition for employment”*.²³⁹

The Act mandates that every office must set up an Inquiry Committee, with a total of three members, one of whom must be a woman, which will receive and inquire into complaints. Section 4(4) holds that all inquiries are to conclude within 30 days of their initiation. It also makes provisions for the establishment of Ombudspersons at federal and provincial levels. In practice, the roll-out of this Act has been slow, as observed in the Gender Strategy of Police, *“the extent of oversight, dissemination and implementation of sexual harassment rules varies to check and penalise inappropriate behaviours across and within the police organisations”*.²⁴⁰

238 In earlier research carried out by IL, male police officers belonging to various cadres in police departments from Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan were surveyed to assess their perceptions of women police, see Individualland (2012), *Male police perception of women police in Pakistan*: http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rokdownloads&view=file&Itemid=172.

239 *The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010*: <http://www.qau.edu.pk/pdfs/ha.pdf>.

240 GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, p. 20.

Appropriate Facilities and Policies

Much of the policies and appropriate facilities that would enable greater participation of women police in the workplace are either not in place, or not mainstreamed in Pakistan.²⁴¹ Instead, there are occasional examples of good practice in individual women's police stations or police departments. In consultations for the Gender Strategy it was found that,

*“Working conditions in terms of lack of basic facilities and often insensitive workplace environment at police stations discourage women’s deployment in those units. The absence of flexible working hours affect the work life balance for both men and women police. It has implications for women with young kids or for those having other responsibilities. The women police referred to a lack of sensitivity to their specific needs by male colleagues and supervisors”.*²⁴²

Safety while travelling to and from work is a particular issue for women officers given the general environment and attitudes towards women in the police. It was highlighted repeatedly as a source of major concern by women officers and cited most frequently as lack of facilities that needed to be addressed. At an annual women's police conference held in 2014, one officer shared that:

*“I feel a crippling sense of insecurity when I have to catch a cab to return home. I always note down the taxi number and though I'm exhausted I stay alert. If the taxi driver tries to change the route, I'm prepared to jump out of a moving car”.*²⁴³

The following table was compiled by IL following field observation visits made by them, and as can be seen, practices vary greatly.²⁴⁴ For example, the Islamabad women's police station is the only one which has a childcare centre out of all the women's police stations visited by IL. Only Gilgit has pick and drop transport facilities for its women staff. Though not reflected in the table below, the National Highway and Motorway Police has a flexible working policy which allows women police officers to be posted in close proximity to their homes and they are assigned duties during the day shift.

241 For example, Article 37(e) of the Constitution of Pakistan requires the State to make provisions for maternity benefits for women in employment; this is not done in practice.

242 GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, (2012-16), p. 2.

243 Maha Mussadaq (2014), “Annual conference: Women police - braving challenges old and new”, *Tribune*, 26 March 2014: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/687264/annual-conference-women-police-braving-challenges-old-and-new/>.

244 Visits were made to 15 women's police stations, one women's reporting center, six complaint cells and three training facilities. See IL, (2013), *Women Police as Change Agents*: http://www.individualland.com/index.php?option=com_rokdownloads&view=file&Itemid=248.

Table 32: Facilities and Policies for Women Police

	Lukens	Ilipurkhas	Hyderabad	West Zone Karachi	East Zone Karachi	South Zone Karachi	Islamabad	Gilgit	Gh/lor Gakoch	Hunza	Skardu	Peshawar	Abbottabad	Rawalpindi	Faisalabad
Staff	25	23	-	23	12	3?	35	-	-	-	-	102	33	85	37
Pick and drop	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Easily accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vehicles	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Residence	Hall with no furniture	Residence for families	No	Residence for families	Residence for families	Residence for terrifies	Barracks are available	2 small rooms with no furniture	1 room	No	No	2 Barracks	No	3 Barracks and 12 Rooms for 35 Ladies	Yes
Authority to carry weapon	Officers	Officers	Officers	Officers	Yes	Yes	Only Officers	Only Officers	Only Officers	Only Officers	No	No	Officers	Only Officers	Only Officers
Station in charge	Inspector Zarina Chandio	Sub-Inspector Moomal Shaheen	Sub-Inspector Haleema Chardo	Sub-Inspector Anila Unaar	Inspector Sajida Jamali	Inspector Syeda Ghazala	ASI Sadaf B. David	Sub-Inspector Brici Mariam	-	Sub-Inspector GulabPari	Sub-Inspector Gdshan	Inspector Zaib unNisa	Inspector Nazis Noreen	Sub-Inspector Bushra Balool	Inspector Zahida Chuadhary
Male staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	No	lb	Yes	Yes
Washrooms	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	04 in good condition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	01	Yes	Yes	4 in good condition
Mobility of women police	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted	Not Restricted
Day care	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	No	-	-

Without the appropriate support, policies and practices in place, it is extremely challenging for women to participate meaningfully and succeed in making policing a career; several opt not to do so, as summed up, “*Few women opt for making it their career due to cultural inhibitions and unfriendly workplace environment, illogical working hours, lack of transportation and related facilities*”.²⁴⁵ In fact, the interviews revealed that most women police officers can only make policing a career because of the support received from their families. 88% of the female police officers surveyed in 2013 believed that women should be assigned flexible duty hours to facilitate their working in the police

It is likely that women who succeed in making policing a career are those who are determined to work as police women. They are the ones who can face down opposition from their families and are prepared to struggle to combine responsibilities. Thus policing as a profession for women will not be seen as an appealing or mainstream option. One senior officer acknowledged that:

“Women will join this department if we provide them with better facilities than we have right now”.

If Pakistan’s police organisations are serious about wanting to increase the number of women in policing, they must match words with actions; otherwise quotas may initially get filled but people will not remain in the job if it becomes too difficult or impossible to do so. Again, the Gender Strategy provides specific action points which need to be prioritised and resourced to be implemented.

Deployment and Allocation of Duties

The nature and impact of the security situation on policing in Pakistan, particularly in areas where safety for women is an issue has an impact on the deployment of women to certain postings and duties. Research carried out for this report suggested that some women police officers preferred desk jobs over field postings. Nonetheless, this does not absolve the police of its responsibilities towards gender mainstreaming. It is clear that there are problems in relation to adequate facilities or policies that can enable or encourage women police officers to take up such postings. It is therefore too facile to merely suggest that women do not want these postings. On the contrary, the reasons why these postings are unpopular need to be explored and addressed.

There are also attitudinal aspects at play. For example the 2013 survey indicated that only 42% believed that women should perform duties in remote areas, while 63% thought that women should not be assigned duties in violence-prone areas. However, even if women are not deployed in field positions, this does not mean that their numbers in the overall police service cannot be increased if the conditions within the service are made gender-friendly and there is further examination of the roles that *can* be performed by women.

Further, the segregation of women from mainstream policing into women’s police stations or women-specific desks and tasks, rather than being allocated duties or deployed in situations as regular police officers, is increasingly evident. As discussed later, the logic and value of police stations tasked exclusively with receiving complaints related to women and providing an underserved segment with a culturally acceptable facility to access justice is clear. However, at another level it feeds into stereotypes, isolates women police officers and affirms a segregation mentality in the establishment. It denies women officers the chance to compete for higher positions, it denies specialisation, and worst of all perhaps, creates a habit of disregard in the mainstream that crimes and violence against women and remedies for women in society need not concern men.

²⁴⁵ _ (2013) “*Woman Police: Life in Uniform*”, *Dawn*, 4 June 2014: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1027781/women-police-life-in-uniform>.

The report of the Gender Strategy exercise confirms the isolation of women police:

“The role of women in police with respect to different functions of policing is not clearly defined to facilitate their deployment in a wider range of duties neither upon appointment nor during their career progression. By and large, women police perform an auxiliary role of providing support to the male police in dealing with women offenders and victims, helping in house raids, body searches, performing security and court duties, etc”.

*“The field posting of women police is not encouraged. Therefore, women are invisible in mainstream police stations and often excluded from performing specialised functions such as investigation, interrogation, forensic evidence collection, etc. Women rarely serve as SHOs in general police stations except the Women’s Police Stations”.*²⁴⁶

The survey indicated conflicting views on the deployment and allocation of duties to women police officers. On the one hand, 72% of respondents were of the view that women police officers should be placed alongside their male counterparts, but in response to a separate question, 45% believed that women police officers should be assigned cases and crimes specific to women and should handle only women offenders.

There were also mixed experiences among the women officers interviewed for this research. There were clearly a number who were deployed to and allocated a range of duties. Others were confined to certain roles, and pointed in particular to attitudes from male colleagues, lack of experience or opportunities to get experience and the lack of appropriate facilities and policies. It also emerged that in some areas, women police below officer rank were not issued weapons while men of the same rank were.

Women can also be hugely supported. In April 2014, the police chief of Karachi appointed a woman as the first female Station House Officer of the police station in the Clifton neighbourhood. Before this, she served ten years in a women’s police station. She herself pointed out in an interview to IL that because the work in all-women police stations is limited, when she first joined the mainstream police station, she realised that she was very inexperienced in basic policing duties like responding to rescue calls and securing a crime scene. She was able to build these skills only by working in the mainstream police station.

Training and Support

There is a mixed picture on training. Some women had trained separately from men and some together. A few of those who trained separately said that it was necessary and important in their particular location. Most stated that the training was the same, at least at the basic or pre-service level.

There was some evidence of women officers availing additional specialised training, but not extensively. Of the women officers surveyed, 73% participated in joint trainings with men. About 24% felt that training of women officers differed from that of the men, and of those, 56% said it was more lenient while 44% said it was tough. In general, experience in relation to training appeared patchy and inconsistent. One media article reported the findings of a symposium organised by the Women Police Network of Pakistan that *“urged conducting of proper training of women police officials, as the current training environment resulted in a fair proportion of women recruits to drop out”*.²⁴⁷

One distinct differential which disadvantages women in several areas is that women police have to wait for training until a fixed number of women are available. In a situation where the number of women police is low, to

²⁴⁶ GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, 2012-16, pp. 19-20.

²⁴⁷ _ (2013), “Lack of recognition hampers women from joining police”, *Pakistan Today*, 21 March 2013: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2013/03/21/city/islamabad/lack-of-recognition-hampers-women-from-joining-police/>.

wait until a group of women is formed acts as a barrier (even if it is driven by convenience, economy, or not to have a woman train alone with men). This has serious consequences for women police as they have to carry on, for years sometimes, without receiving even basic training. In one case, a policewoman got her basic training only six years after she joined the police and after submitting over 50 applications, which is available as standard to male recruits. It also negatively affects their promotion prospects. This makes efforts towards active and targeted recruitment of women, through new innovative strategies, all the more necessary.

It is essential that women police officers receive the necessary training and support to enable them to apply for and perform different duties and tasks, as well as to progress within the organisation. It is also important that the facilities and policies that are needed to enable and support women police officers during their duties are also available during training. For example, if training is carried out at a remote or external location, transport and accommodation need to be provided. Likewise, timing and childcare facilities are important for women with family responsibilities. The Gender Strategy reports that:

*“The women police also lag behind in receiving mandatory training courses which serves as one of the bottlenecks to women’s promotion to the senior ranks. Lack of opportunities for specialised skills training is another limiting factor. There are no prospects for personal development, mentoring and exposure for career growth. Inadequate training facilities, out-of-town training venues and long duration of the training courses discourage women, especially those with the family obligations, to avail the capacity development opportunities”.*²⁴⁸

It is also important for women police officers to be made trainers in great numbers. There is a lack of women at present; in 25 police training institutes, there are 19 female and 916 male instructors, with women invisible at the higher level positions.²⁴⁹

Efforts have to be made to assure and encourage women in training, particularly for those who may be reluctant to train alongside men. In one incident, a senior officer of DIG rank shared that:

“In a firing range training of women and men police personnel I had to convince the women police, who were uncomfortable training alongside their male counterparts. I told them that joining the police force has eliminated gender disparities. They were convinced to train and in the end a woman officer won the competition”.

Alongside support from male counterparts, such leadership and encouragement from senior officers is incumbent on them to motivate women officers, and also imbibe gender equality within themselves.

Retention and Promotion

There were no figures available to this research on whether retention of women police officers is an issue. It is important that statistics on this are gathered and monitored, and the reasons why women leave the service are identified through more qualitative means such as exit interviews, to address any internal causes.

Regarding promotion, as can be seen in the tables below, out of 4,020 women police officers, only 85 (approximately 2%) occupy the higher ranks. Procedures (or lack thereof) for promotion are a problem generally across the policing organisations in Pakistan, as they are often based on unclear, non-transparent and non-merit-based processes. However, this situation is not exclusive to women police; male police also have to wait a long time for promotion because of political appointments, shoulder promotions (enhancement in rank)

²⁴⁸ GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, 2012-16, p. 19.

²⁴⁹ GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, 2012-16, p. 21.

and a lack of capacity in the training schools. But there are particular policies and practices which specifically disadvantage women.

First, one criteria for promotion is completion of training. Since many women police do not undertake training because they have to wait for more women, or due to their domestic responsibilities, they get late promotions. Many women may not get promotions due to non-fulfilment of this criteria, through no fault of their own. It was clear that several women officers remained in the same positions for many years and some expressed concern at their inability to progress in the organisation which they felt was based on their gender:

“I have served for 18 years...We perform more duties than the men and get fewer facilities and promotions than men. We have a low promotion system”.

“We also want to serve at higher ranks. Even our constables are educated with masters’ degrees. The promotion level is not satisfactory. Through this interview I want to inform my police officers that they should do something on this issue”.

A second major barrier for women is that there are usually fewer posts made available to women at higher positions. In some police organisations, women’s careers simply cannot go on beyond a particular rank:

“In KPK, currently, there is no provision for promotion of women beyond the level of DSP. In NH&MP, women’s roles are limited to field patrolling and the career path does not go beyond the position of Senior Patrolling Officer (inspector level). In the Railways, career progression halts at the Constable level for women. Women’s upward mobility is constrained due to a lack of policy, preference to structure and lack of career planning for women. Gendered notions of women’s roles, their contributions, capacity and commitment to a police career are implicitly limiting factors to elevate the status of women in the police”.²⁵⁰

There is an urgent need to examine and remove these blockages, and increase the number of sanctioned posts available for women. Women should not be shunted only to women-specific positions. Promotions for all police personnel, men and women, should be based on expertise, experience, individual performance and seniority.

As stated in the Gender Strategy:

“Despite long service tenures, women are often deprived of promotion to the higher ranks because of the limited availability of seats particularly at the executive level, non-completion of mandatory courses and inability to fulfil the promotion criteria. The field tenure is a part of the criteria and women are often refused field postings. Apparently, the promotion criterion is the same for women and men; however, inherent biases do exist but are not considered as potential barriers to women’s career progression”.

Statistics gathered by the National Police Bureau and published in the Gender Strategy clearly demonstrate the scale of the problem.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, 2012-16, p. 19.

²⁵¹ Women Police Network, Women Police in Junior Ranks (Constable – Inspector), <http://wvnpakistan.org/women-police-in-junior-ranks.php>; Gender Strategy, 2012-16, p. 19.

Table 29: Lower Ranks held by Women Police

Rank	Number of Women
Inspector	113
SI	184
ASI	311
HC	363
Constable	2,971

Data: National Police Bureau, Police HQ Punjab & FIA. (December 2011)

Table 30: Higher Ranks held by Women Police

Police Organisation	DIG	SSP	SP	DSP	ASP
Islamabad police	-	-	1	2	1
Punjab	-	1	12	41	1
Sindh	-	-	6	10	-
KPK	-	-	-	-	-
Balochistan	-	-	-	1	-
Gilgit Baltistan	-	-	-	1	1
Director NPB	1	-	-	-	-
ASPs trainees & in FC	-	-	-	-	6
Total	1	1	19	55	9

The latest figures available show some improvements, a combined result of promotions, transfers and retirement. For example, new information supplied to IL indicates that there are now 20 women ASPs across Pakistan, seven women DSPs in KPK, and one woman SP in Gilgit-Baltistan.²⁵²

Across the ranks, the figures of women police are reflected in this table:

Table 31: Women Police in Different Ranks

Sr.	Rank	Number of Women
1	SSP	1
2	SP	19
3	ASP	3
4	DSP	55
5	Inspector	113
6	Sub Inspector	184
7	ASI	311
8	Head Constable	363
9	Constable	2,971
	Total	4,020

Not only is it important for women to have the opportunity to progress and perform in senior positions, it is essential in the context of such low numbers to set role models that other women police officers can aspire to. It

²⁵² This information was shared with IL in the months leading to the publication and the numbers are stated in the earlier sections of the chapter. See also: http://www.npa.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=161&Itemid=550. However no comprehensive official updated statistics have been published.

is equally important to convince other women in society that they are welcome in this profession and can excel in it. A few notable senior women police officers were interviewed for this research, one of whom was a Deputy Inspector General, the only woman police officer at that level.

All-Women Police Stations

As mentioned earlier, the first women's police station in Pakistan came about under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto in 1994. There is no doubt that this was an extremely important step in recognising the particular needs of women in accessing justice and ensuring that women offenders were not vulnerable to any inappropriate behaviour from male officers.

According to the IL research, in 2013 there were 19 women's police stations across the country, and field visits to these revealed a mixed picture. The "stations" were in various states of physical disrepair: some comprised only one room; some barely had furniture and lacked facilities and resources; a few had access to a vehicle and others did not.

Islamabad has one women's police station, which has several facilities including a day care centre. Punjab has three women's police stations, of which only the one at Faisalabad is a model police station with all facilities available. The women's police station in Rawalpindi does not have facilities such as forensic kits, furniture, etc. In Sindh, there are seven women's police stations in the cities of Larkana, Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad and Karachi. Facilities such as audio/visual equipment, vehicles, office, etc. were available at Larkana but were subsequently removed. In Mirpurkhas, the women's police station established in 2012 does not have sufficient facilities and the building requires maintenance. Sukkur has a woman complaint cell, which was originally established in 2008 as a women's police station. Balochistan only has a reporting centre.

The value of these police stations for women in the society they have been set up to serve must come into question when it is realised that in some cases they are severely constrained. For example, in Karachi there are three women's police stations of which one is fully functional while the other two, established in 2008, were not notified police stations. This meant First Information Reports (FIRs) or crime complaints, could not be registered there which is the first and one of the most vital functions of the police to begin investigation into a case. These two stations were only notified four years later in 2012. In Peshawar, the women's police station is located in an area not easily accessible to the general public, which would make it much more difficult for women to access it. The Abbotabad women's police station has inadequate facilities to register FIRs. It thus receives fewer complaints than similarly placed general police stations.

Of further concern is that in several cases male police officers were posted to carry out the investigations. So in actual fact, these were not women-only police stations. For example, Islamabad Police Station had a male SHO for a while as no woman officers of the ranks of Inspector or Sub-Inspector were available at that time (the SHO now is a woman). Facilities in police stations across Pakistan can be sparse but there is a sense of deprivation of basic necessities in women's police stations.

The importance of these stations in providing access to women and in making women police visible is recognised, especially in the absence of women in all general police stations. But there is a danger, which appears to be very real, that women police officers are shunted into positions in these stations where they have no opportunity to progress, carry out routine duties and get mainstreamed into the police service. Even policewomen feel they are being side-lined, as articulated by one woman police officer at a seminar on supporting and empowering women police:

*“Men and women work side by side in other organisations, why are we caged in a separate women’s police station”.*²⁵³

One woman SP serving in Gilgit-Baltistan stated that:

“There is no need to have separate police stations for men and women. Like every other profession, men and women should also work together in police departments”.

Moreover, since many women’s stations are not sufficiently resourced to provide proper police services to women, they defeat their purpose. They further side-line women and enforce the notions and stereotypes that already exist, that their complaints are not important, as confirmed by the Gender Strategy of Police:

*“There is little impact made by women’s police stations due to inadequate senior-level support and authority to exercise their given (limited) mandate. The approach of establishing WPS somehow contributed towards segregation of women police from the mainstream policing services. The police service largely perceives women police in a restrictive role, not in the capacity of fully engaged officers performing diverse policing functions”.*²⁵⁴

253 Staff Correspondent (2013), *“Seminar: Women police officials seek equal opportunity at workplace”*, *Tribune*, 5 March 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/515699/seminar-women-police-officials-seek-equal-opportunity-at-workplace/>.

254 GIZ, Gender Strategy of Police, p. 20.

SECTION 4

Conclusion and Recommendations

The cumulative impact of the barriers and challenges faced by women police officers in Pakistan are substantial, as summarised below:

*“Beyond the chauvinism and rejection that women police officers in Pakistan encounter from their male colleagues and members of the public, they must also contend with poor training, long work hours, the dangers of terrorism (on top of “ordinary” criminals) as well as the distrust of a wide swath of Pakistanis who regard police in general as corrupt and largely ineffective”.*²⁵⁵

In this inhospitable environment, the achievements and successes of some Pakistani police women must be recognised, particularly those who reached very senior positions. There are also many Pakistani police women who serve internationally and are excelling there.²⁵⁶

Regardless of their small numbers, the women police officers make their presence felt, by performing their duties, in spite of the odds that hinder their performance and growth. In 2011, a woman Pakistani Police Officer, Shahzadi Gulfam, serving in a United Nations (UN) peace operation, received the International Female Police Peacekeeper Award.

The trends in international service indicate that women in Pakistan do want to become police officers, but do not find domestic policing an appealing option. This desire to leave the country means that the country is losing talent and skill that it should be retaining and encouraging.

It is recognised that the starting point is a low base, and there are tremendous cultural and other contextual challenges which mean that this journey of change may take time. As such, the goal of increasing and cherishing women police officers in Pakistan needs to be seen in the medium to long-term basis. It is also in need of immediate action and short-term, straightforward measures can be taken.

This report identifies the key issues to be addressed, and these have been reinforced in other research:

- Cultural attitudes towards women working as police officers need to change. This is a challenge: It is difficult to encourage women to join the police because of these attitudes, but these attitudes will only change and acceptance will only increase when more women are seen in the job.
- The number of women police is totally insufficient. It is less than 1 per cent, which is chronically low and appears to be one of the poorest in the world.
- Merely setting quotas will not automatically increase the number of women joining the police.
- A policy of zero tolerance of sexual harassment is insufficient: there should be actual zero tolerance in practice.

²⁵⁵ Palash Ghosh (2013), “No Country for Women: Pakistani Females Face Extraordinary Obstacle as Police Officers”, *International Business Times*, 22 October 2013, <http://www.ibtimes.com/no-country-women-pakistani-females-face-extraordinary-obstacles-police-officers-1434730>.

²⁵⁶ _ (2011), “Pakistani wins International Female Police Peacekeeping Award”, *Tribune*, 23 August 2011: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/237524/pakistani-wins-international-female-police-peacekeeping-award/>.

- Women are restricted from considerable types of participation in the police owing to a lack of appropriate facilities and policies. Till such basic changes are made, policing is likely to remain an inhospitable and unappealing work environment for women.
- Facilities and policies are also needed to ensure deployment of women in the field and other postings which they currently do not avail.
- Women police officers are by and large confined to support roles. They are not allocated duties or deployed across the range of police activities. This confirms stereotypes and denies women the opportunity to gain the experience necessary for them to progress in the organisation.
- Women are thus massively under-represented in the senior ranks in the police.
- Women's police stations are woefully under-resourced and serve to exclude women from mainstream policing.

It is essential that the recommendations made here and in the Gender Strategy are put into action. There are several key factors to ensure that change actually happens: resources, political will and action. It is acknowledged that policing as a whole in Pakistan is under-resourced. However, if the country is serious about recruiting and empowering women police, it needs to actively target resources. Furthermore, many of the measures required, actually cost very little or nothing at all. Change of any kind requires the will to make it happen. On paper at least, there is a will to change women's involvement in policing in Pakistan. However, the will to deliver change manifests itself most clearly in action and implementation. According to the Gender Strategy for example, each police department was to develop an overall Gender Responsive Plan of Action and annual action plans with regular progress reviews. The period of the Strategy is 2012-2016, but the extent to which there have been any actions and results is unclear. Monitoring progress and publishing this information would assure women that there is change and that they will be welcome in the police force. It would also help build public confidence in policing. The latter is particularly important for women, to ensure increased access to justice for them.

Recommendations

For the Central Government

1. Initiate a comprehensive programme of reform of the police:
 - Begin with a new template policing legislation to replace the Police Act, 1861 and harmonise legislation across the provinces and territories. The original Police Order, 2002 (before amendments) still provides a good template
 - Ensure that any necessary reforms are adequately resourced and implementation is monitored.
2. Provide adequate resources to provincial governments to enable their police services to carry out required infrastructural works to include:
 - Pick and drop facilities
 - Basic facilities for women's police stations
 - Day care centres
 - Women's toilets
 - Women's restrooms or changing facilities
 - Adequate accommodation during postings.

For the Provincial Governments

1. Reform policing legislation to bring it up to date with the standards and requirements of modern, democratic policing.

For the National Police Bureau

1. Ensure that the necessary policies are drafted and disseminated for adoption by police departments in relation to recruitment standards, child care, maternity leave, duty hours, flexible working and transport.
2. Coordinate the effective implementation of the Gender Strategy by demanding delivery of the proposed gender responsive plans of action.
3. Engage in oversight of the implementation of the gender reform process by, for example, reviewing and monitoring timetables and targets set in action plans.
4. Enable the publication of information in relation to implementation to build transparency and confidence.
5. Increase engagement and collaboration with civil society to ensure that efforts are complementary and that the process moves beyond the policy and police infrastructure into grassroots communities where women need to be reached.

For the Police Departments

1. Embark on an overhaul of the recruitment process to ensure applications from women
 - Review and standardise recruitment requirements
 - Create more sanctioned posts for women at recruitment
 - Engage in more substantive efforts to ensure that the quotas are filled
 - In particular, conduct awareness-raising, outreach and support to women to encourage them to apply.
2. Take measures to tackle the dominant male culture to make it a more comfortable and accepting environment for women officers:
 - Engage in a comprehensive programme of gender sensitisation across all ranks and units
 - Demonstrate leadership and support from the most senior levels concerning the role and importance of women officers
 - Adopt codes of conduct or other related policies and procedures that ensure that discrimination, bias, harassment or other inappropriate or unacceptable gender-based behaviour carry disciplinary consequences.
3. Ensure that zero tolerance on sexual harassment is implemented in practice:
 - Implement the sexual harassment mechanisms required by law
 - Ensure that women are involved throughout in the mechanisms and processes
 - Put in place the necessary support and protection for those who complain of harassment.
4. Embark on a comprehensive infrastructural programme (resourced by government, with resources actually spent), to ensure that every police station or district has:
 - Basic facilities for women's police stations

- Pick and drop facilities
 - Day care centres
 - Women's toilets
 - Women's restrooms or changing facilities
 - Adequate accommodation during postings.
5. Introduce duty hours and flexible working policies.
 6. Ensure that women officers are given adequate in-service training and support to apply for and perform different duties within and across the organisation:
 - Review the extent to which training based on numbers available acts as a block and adopt measures to address this, such as affirmative action to actively encourage women to join training courses
 - Provide adequate facilities at training centres to enable women's participation
 - Increase the number of women officers providing training.
 7. Ensure women are not confined to gender-based policing roles and are given adequate training, support and experience to be mainstreamed throughout the police:
 - Make active efforts to ensure that the allocation of duties and postings to women officers goes beyond the perceived "women-only" tasks or women's police stations
 - Carry out a detailed review of the positions women officers currently occupy, how long they have been there and identify opportunities for their transfer.
 8. Convert the promotion system in the police into one based on transparency and merit so that women can compete openly and equally with men:
 - Ensure there are real opportunities to enable women to progress beyond the lower ranks into senior positions
 - Address the training issues identified to ensure women officers have the necessary skills, experience and confidence to progress.
 9. The extent to which women police are retained needs to be examined, and information on this routinely collected to identify and remedy problems.
 10. Review the policy of women's police stations to consider whether women's desks in all stations could be a more effective option. If these stations are to be retained, urgent action is needed to provide them with adequate staff, powers, resources and facilities.

Annexure

Survey questionnaire administered to women police (Bangladesh, India and Maldives)

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative: Questionnaire for women police

Questionnaire

This survey is being conducted by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative as part of a report on women in policing. We will keep your responses and identity confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Name : _____
Age : _____
Rank : _____
Marital Status : _____
Years in service : _____
Police Station : _____

Please fill / tick the appropriate choice.

1. Why did you join the police?

2. Did your family support your joining the police?

YES NO

3. What are your main duties?

4. How many hours do you work daily?

8 hours

8 to 12 hours

More than 12 hours

5. Do you feel you are treated just like your male colleagues?

Yes No

6. Is it hard being on duty all the time?

Yes No

7. Is the police department a good place for women to work in?

Yes No

1 of 3

8. Has the police department put in policies or facilities which make it easier for women to be in the police?

Yes No

9. If yes, what are they and how do they help you?

10. Is there a separate toilet and resting room for women police in your police station?

Yes No

11. Work in the police requires complete knowledge of law and procedure. Do you feel your training gives you this knowledge?

Yes No

12. Does your training include specific gender content/sensitization?

Yes No

13. If yes, do you feel this training is effective?

Yes No

14. Is there any difference in the training (physical and other) that is given to male and females?

Yes No

15. Have you ever faced any kind of sexual harassment where you work?

Yes No

16. Do you know you can complain against any kind of sexual harassment at your workplace?

Yes No

17. Do you think more women are needed in the police?

Yes No

18. Should all police personnel be given flexible duty hours?

No, only women
No, only men
Yes, everyone should

19. Do you think there is a need to have a women's helpdesk in every police station?

Yes No

20. What three things do you like best about your job?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

21. What three things would make you more comfortable in your work?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

22. Would you like to work in an all-women police station?

Yes No

23. Do you think women find it easier to complain to a woman police officer?

Yes No

24. Do you feel that your uniform gives you:

Less authority than male police
More authority
Equal authority

25. Do you think the public respects a woman police :

The same as male police
Less than male police
More than male police

CHRI Programmes

CHRI's work is based on the belief that for human rights, genuine democracy and development to become a reality in people's lives, there must be high standards and functional mechanisms for accountability and participation within the Commonwealth and its member countries. CHRI furthers this belief through strategic initiatives and advocacy on human rights, access to justice and access to information. It does this through research, publications, workshops, information dissemination and advocacy.

Access to Justice

Police Reforms: In too many countries the police are seen as oppressive instrument of state rather than as protectors of citizens' rights, leading to widespread rights violations and denial of justice. CHRI promotes systemic reform so that the police act as upholders of the rule of law rather than as instruments of current regime. In India, CHRI's programme aims at mobilising public support for police reform. In South Asia, CHRI works to strengthen civil society engagement on police reforms. In East Africa and Ghana, CHRI is examining police accountability issues and political interference.

Prisons Reforms: CHRI's work is focused on increasing transparency of a traditionally closed system and exposing malpractices. A major area is focussed on highlighting failures of the legal system that result in terrible overcrowding and unconscionably long pre-trial detention and prison overstay, and engaging in interventions to ease this. Another area of concentration is aimed at reviving the prison oversight systems that have completely failed. We believe that attention to these areas will bring improvements to the administration of prisons as well as have a knock-on effect on the administration of justice overall.

Access to Information

CHRI is acknowledged as one of the main organisations working to promote access to information across the Commonwealth. Its program encourages countries to pass and implement effective right to information laws. We routinely assist in the development of legislation and have been particularly successful in promoting right to information in India, Bangladesh and Ghana where we are the Secretariat for the coalition. We regularly critique new bills and intervene to bring best practices into governments and civil society knowledge both in the time when laws are being formulated and when they are first being implemented. Our experience of working across even in hostile environments as well as culturally varied jurisdictions allows CHRI to bring valuable insights into countries seeking to evolve and implement new laws on right to information. In Ghana, for instance we have been promoting knowledge about the value of access to information which is guaranteed by law while at the same time pushing for introduction of an effective and progressive law. In Ghana as and when the access to information law comes into being we intend to build public knowledge in parallel with monitoring the law and using it in ways which indicate impact of the law on system accountability – most particularly in the area of policing and the working of the criminal justice system.

Strategic Initiatives Programme

CHRI monitors member states' compliance with human rights obligations and advocates around human rights exigencies where such obligations are breached. CHRI strategically engages with regional and international bodies including the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, the UN and the African Commission for Human and People's Rights. Ongoing strategic initiatives include: Advocating for and monitoring the Commonwealth's reform; Reviewing Commonwealth countries' human rights promises at the UN Human Rights Council and engaging with its Universal Periodic Review; Advocating for the protection of human rights defenders and civil society space; and Monitoring the performance of National Human Rights Institutions in the Commonwealth while advocating for their strengthening.

This report looks at the situation of women in policing in Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, and Pakistan. It is based on the premise that gender equality, besides being a value to be upheld in and of itself, is a necessary element for the police establishment to demonstrate if law enforcement is to be seen as genuinely impartial. Beyond this, it champions the inclusion of women in policing as there is little to support the myth that policing is a "man's work" alone. The report presents information on strategies and policies adopted by governments and police departments in the four countries to bring women on an equal footing, and also analyses what more needs to be done. Most importantly, it draws on the experience of women police personnel of different ranks in each country to give a glimpse of their realities, the challenges they face, and the larger institutional cultures and environments they work within.

Published with support from:



USO House

6, Special Institutional Area
New Delhi 110067, India
Phone: +91-11-26862064 or +91-11-26863846
Fax: +91-11-26862042
Website: www.southasia.fnst.org | www.stiftung-freiheit.org



Delegation of the European Union to India

5/5, Shantiniketan, New Delhi - 110 021
Phone: +91-11-66781919
Fax: +91-11-66781955
Website: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/index_en.htm

The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of CHRI and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
55A, Siddharth Chambers, Third Floor
Kalu Sarai, New Delhi – 110016
Tel: +91-11-4318 0200, Fax: +91-11-26864688
E-mail: info@humanrightsinitiative.org
Website: www.humanrightsinitiative.org