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Women Police Personnel: Status, Challenges and Reforms

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Abstract

The functional constraints of the Police Profession want a cautious and slow moving approach, which, when spelled out in operational terms, fixes a very low priority for police reforms. The problems of Indian Police specially, the women police personnel, are either too obvious or too subtle to be comprehended by a layman. The job of policing requires political direction and discretionary interpretations, subject to the overall control of the judiciary of the country. The strength of women police personnel is inadequate & require a lot of efforts to maintain gender equality and women related crimes.

Introduction

The Indian constitution with its unique kind of centralized federalism puts Police and law and order in Tate list of the VII schedule. Simultaneously, it includes Police Training, fire Arms and explosives, Prevention Detention and several union police agencies in the Union list, due to which it permits the Ministry of Home (Central Government) to keep the State system of Police order under some sort of federal supervision.

Indian women and their Constitutional Rights

In the Indian constitution it is assured that no one will be discriminated on the basis of sex. The following articles in the Constitution of India indicate special provisions for the education of women.

Articles 15 (1) States: " The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion , race caste, sex , place of birth or any of them " /

Articles 15 (3) States: "Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provisions for women and children".

Articles 16 (1) States: "There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state."

Articles 39 (a) States: "The citizens, men and women equally have the right to their adequate means of livelihood."

Women Employment

Women economic empowerment is absolutely essential for raising their status in society. Several studies have also indicated that women's employment leads to better education, health and opportunities of the girl child. The empowering of women economically would also help in building confidence. But in reality we have seen that their progress is retarded due to societal evils.

Awareness generation programmes for administrators, Parliamentarians, Police officials, judiciary on gender sensitization issues would lead gradually to the realization of the societal responsibility for handling crimes against women. Above all police officials of all ranks need to be recruited to women's cells. Research on 'women development' which has evolved during the decade as an important instrument to advance the role of women, has been useful. Such studies have primarily been confined to research and have made little impact on the training and value transformation of younger generations. The promotion of such studies works as an instrument for enhancing the role of women in development and challenging roles like police personnel.

The steps adopted by Government in some states for reservations of women in employment, like police, may be considered as milestone so for the employment of women of the state is concerned but there is a great requirement of empirical studies with reforms & awareness in education system.

Role of Women in Police

Over the past few decades, the role of women in policing & working as police officers, have changed. Policing used to lean heavily towards physical attributes such as height, weight and brute strength. Over time, the attributes that were thought to make good police officers, have shifted. The job still requires a great level of physical fitness'. However, what's more important is good ethical character and excellent interpersonal, problem-solving and conflicts resolution skills.

This shift can be attributed to a new productive style of Policing called community Policing. Community policing is a Philosophy that promotes organizational strategies which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem solving techniques. It proactively addresses the immediate condition that give rise to Public safety issues such as crime, social disorder and fear of crimes. Generally women are good communicators with great interpersonal skills while this is important to policing as a whole. It especially helps in situations where victim feels more comfortable discussing the details of a crime with a female officer. Female officers complement their male partners and can provide an alternate perspective on a problem women often approach and solve problems from a different angle than their male counterparts.

Anomalies of the Personnel System

There are several significant anomalies that can be pointed out and which cause organizational mal-functioning. The bureaucratic culture of paternalism which ruralised recruitment of the constabulary, abuse of discretionary powers of Police authority, add to the most sensitive problems of police personnel administration in India. Out of the innumerable problems of Police personnel that have grown from history, social norms, professional police culture and functional potentialities, can be identified as follows:

- Lack of specialization in Police cadres,
- Police training and Legacies.
- Hazards and risks in police jobs and inadequate compensation and service conditions.
- Low morale and corrupt image of police department.
- Inadequacy of women police personnel in police force.
- Absence of efficient grievance redressed mechanism.
- The police in India continues to be a non- development subject.

Status of Women Police Personnel

Traditionally the job of Police is considered as male dominating profession but now with a change in socio- cultural environment and an increase in educational opportunities, women have started recognizing their strength and their representation in Police Department. But still women as police personnel have consistently been under-represented in India. There are just 499 all women Police station in the country out of a total 15,555 stations until recent times. The share of women in Police was only 1.83 percent in 2001, which increased merely to 4.59 percent in 2010 and 7.10 % in 2016. The strength of women police personnel in some statues can be analysed here under:

States	Total Personnel	Percent of Women Police Personnel
Uttar Pradesh	1,73,341	4.17%
Bihar	93,798	7.15 %
Madhya Pradesh	86,759	4.95 %
Maharashtra	1,76,044	12.07 %
Tamil Nadu	1,09,948	12.99 %
Chandigarh	5,869	4.96 %
Delhi	76,348	9.17 %
Rajasthan	89,346	8.61 %

Source: Annual Reports on Data on Police organization in India, Published by BPRD, 2016.

We can see from the above table that in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar the strength of Women Police Personnel is weak, whereas in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Chandigarh relatively the percentage of representation of women in Police force is better. The Data represented by the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPRD) shows that actual strength of women police in 2016 was 1,22,912. That means there are 5 women police station in India.

Some issues like gender biasness, job satisfaction, work-family imbalance, sexual harassment and working conditions possess a prerequisite or pro-active role in the solutions of problem of women police personnel. The challenges can be discussed in details which are as follows:

4. Imbalance in Family & Work Burden

Police is considered as a masculinised job and the dual responsibilities of work and family affects both men and women. But the women are mainly responsible for the house chores. So one of the challenges for women Police Personnel is to maintain proper balance between work and family responsibilities.

5. Proper Division of Work

In fact, there is uncertain role of women in Police Department. Most policemen are confused about the way they should tackle and behave with women police personnel. By recruitment into police forces they have to work on domestic violence cases or causes related to the family which still work traditionally. At that occasion they experience several sorts of problems and difficulties.

6. Lack of New Initiatives & Their Proper Implementation First of all, women Police Station was introduced in Kerala in 1973. But this concept did not work and was considered against the interests of women as it segregates them in some way. Gradually that phenomena was abandoned & now moved to ensure that there are women in every Police Station.

7. Proper Training & Awareness

International research has exploded the myth that women are unsuitable for police jobs but if their training system is improved, they may do better job. During training of women there are certain problems like gender insensitiveness, use of rough and abusive language which usually demoralize the trainees and cause paucity of female instructors.

A. Recommendations of the 4th National Conference for Women in Police

(i) Recruitment & Training

“30 % reservation in every recruitment in civil police may be ensured.

“Gender sensitization training should be imparted in a proper manner.

“Induction of women outdoor trainers is recommended.

“Some syllabus and combined training for all the basic courses is also recommended.

B. Service Issues

“Vishakha guidelines to deal with sexual harassment at work place to be strictly implemented.

“To provide career information at a resource centre should be established in each police organization for making them aware about choices in future career and that may be available on Police internet.

“Mentoring and awareness programs about lies in future career as women Police Personnel. “Flexi time and part-time work including job sharing may be considered. Certain jobs such as data entry into computers may be identified for this purpose.

“Women specific equipment should be selected like Bullet Proof Jackets. “Suitable grievances redressal mechanism for women. “Women should be given postings at/near the postings of their husbands’ places as far as possible irrespective of the type of employment of their husbands.

C. Mainstreaming

“There should be common cadre for men and women in police for all ranks so that there are equal promotions for women in police.

“Women SIs should be given postings to police station immediately after completing their training.

“Women police officers to be considered for the posts of SIHIO, SDPO & other mainstream postings such as CBCID & SBCD, depending on their competence and experience.

D. Welfare Measures

“Child care leave on the pattern of GOI may be given by all State Police organizations.

"Crèche facilities should be provided for posted women.

"Training during pregnancy for basic courses for pregnant trainees may be stopped for some time and they may be sent home for at least six months after delivery. Their hard training should be recommence after 1 year of delivery and this should not affect their seniority in the batch.

"Basic amenities like separate toilets and rest rooms should be ensured at workplace.

"Every police organizations should have nodal officers to handle issues relating to women in police.

"State level conference on the line of National Conference for women in Police may be organized in every 2 years. BPRD may give financial assistance for this purpose.

Second Administrative Reform Commission Recommendations:

a) The representation of women in Police at all levels should be increased through affirmative action so that they constitute about 33% of the Police.

b) Police at all levels as well as other functionaries of criminal justice system need to be sensitized on gender issues through well-structured training programs.

c) Citizen groups—and NGOs should be encouraged to increase awareness about the gender issues in society & help bring to light violence against women and also assist the police in the investigation of crimes against women.

Conclusion

Police system deals with complex problems like murder, robbery and assault. These issues are related with the societal problems and children and women are involved in these activities both as victim and as offender. For fulfilling the requirement of more patient and sympathetic employees, women police personnel were recruited. The aim was to change the term 'Police Force' to 'Police System'. There is a lot of requirement to counter the challenges and problems of women police. Recommendations given by Fourth National Conference for Women and

Second Administrative Reform Commission should be adequately implemented or enforced for recognizing their potential. This change is at the initial phase, requires efficient efforts.

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