



Department of Development Studies
Discussion Paper 4

*Needs and Challenges for Women Police:
Study of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police*

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Legal Framework.....	3
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Methodology.....	4
Importance of Women Police.....	5
Needs of Women Police.....	6
Duty Timings and Working Hours.....	6
Pay Scale and Promotion Procedures.....	6
Health and Maternity Leaves.....	6
Infrastructural Needs.....	7
Challenges for Women Police.....	7
Policemen Perception about Women Police.....	7
General People Perception about Women working in Police.....	11
Impact of Police Service on them and their Family.....	8
Conclusion.....	8
References.....	10

1. INTRODUCTION

The persistent segregation patterns of employment limit women to a narrow range of occupations and industries (Jurik, 1998). In fact, there has been created a resentment and antagonism towards working women and employment equity initiatives (Falkenberg, 1997). Women face multiple obstacles while entering into public sphere for employment. These obstacles can be categorised as socio-cultural, religious, ideological and institutional. These are strongly embedded into the women lives due to socialisation process. The gendered socialisation of male and female creates gender division of labor, due to which women are largely excluded from public sphere. Gender inequalities are declining across different regions, cultures and traditions, but the growth is very slow and the gender inequalities are more evident in those countries where population is increasing very fast (Dorius & Firebaugh, 2010). In all professions, especially in police force women have unique and vital role to play but this potentially effective human resource is underutilised. The situation regarding gender equality in police force is getting better but not even satisfactory. Women have encountered enormous difficulties as they think to take police as their career (Melchionne, 1967). Most institutions are working under male dominance and consequently have been shaped according to the needs of males.

In the context of Pakistan, women are also facing different challenges due to the male domination and unfavorable working conditions at workplace. In Pakistan majority of institutions are dominated by men, and constructs such as masculine structure of institutions with masculine values, behaviours and expectations. Historically, the department of police remains male dominated, women in police have low participation and influence throughout the history. In Pakistan women representation in police department is evident to be very low. Due to the socio-cultural norms and religious beliefs women have always been discouraged to join the police force, as it is considered unconventional for women, as a result the police department becomes male dominated from top to bottom, at police station level and as well as at the policy and planning levels. On the other hand, the department working conditions are more protective of the male needs and interest (Individualland, 2012). Less than 1% of police women of total police force are employed in Pakistan and they are not even given any senior ranks. The daunting image of policing as a male profession and a career unsuitable for women does deter their entry (Individualland, 2012).

The induction of women in the police can be traced back to the British rule in India. In 1939 seven (07) women were inducted to the police on temporary basis; the objective was to control women agitators who were part of the farmer's movement in Punjab. After the creation of Pakistan in 1952, twenty five (25) women constables, two head constables and an ASI (Assistant Sup Inspector) were recruited. In 1994 the first ever women police station was established by Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, the staff consisted of an

Inspector, two Sub Inspectors (SI), one ASI, two Head Constables, and 13 constables (HRCP, 2010). Currently the total strength of police is more than 400,000, where only above 37, 00 women represent half of the population, and there are 18 women police stations in Pakistan. Many of the subject expert and police staff declared that due to male dominant culture of police station women are reluctant to adopt this profession. The low representation of women in the police department may be different.

The study was conducted to know the importance of women in policing and working environment for women in police stations. It also indentified the needs and challenges which women are facing while working in police department. The current study recognises the importance of women in making police gender responsive and measures the need for women in the policing. The research study is shedding light on how workplace environment of police stations create obstacles and problems for women police force, and negatively impact the effectiveness of women police force and discourage other women to join the police force.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The individual's right to work is being protected by different national and international legal instruments of human rights. Article 23 of the United Nation Declaration of Human rights (UNDHR) provided that *“Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work”*. Similarly the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provided that *“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights”*. Furthermore CEDAW protects the specific needs and interests of women in terms of employment. In particular the right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, safeguarding of the function of reproduction, prohibit dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave, dismissals on the basis of marital status, and to encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities. Goal 3 of the MDGs *“Promote gender equality and empower women”* directly related to women status. One of the indicators to monitor the progress on this goal is set to be the *“Share of women in wage employment in the nonagricultural sector”*. Pakistan as a signatory of the above convention and declaration has shown poor progress to achieve the desired outcomes, as women participation in paid employment is evident to be very low.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theorising and theory-building have generally been seen as to make some choices and decisions based on assumptions or theories about the world. There are many formal approaches and perspectives to address the issues. Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchy of need model in 1940-50 in USA and hierarchy of needs theory is still valid today for understanding of the motivation of individuals in an organisation. The theory of human motivation was fully expressed in Maslow's work in a book "Motivation and Personalities" in 1954. Hierarchies remained a very important subject in Sociology. Maslow hierarchy of need often portrays in the shape of pyramid with layers, most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom and the need for self actualisation at the top. Maslow describes five stages which are very effective for the motivation of individual in an organisation. The pyramid of need is divided into two main categories: Deficiency needs and Growth needs. Motivation is psychological process that stimulates excitement and persistence of voluntary action amid at same goal. That psychological process effectives the performance of women working in police stations. Needs theory attempts to identify internal factor that motivate an individual's behaviour and are based on the premises that people are motivated by unfulfilled need. The working conditions for women in police stations are not according to the needs of working women. Biological and physiological needs are air, food, drink, shelter, sex and sleep. While working in police force these physiological, biological needs are not fulfilled. Working hours, duty timings and allocated assignments to women police negatively affect their performance. Similarly, safety needs are protection from elements, security, law and order, stability and freedom from fear. But, for women there is always sense for insecurity at workplace and even out of workplace. Love and belongings, also called social needs, include friendship, intimacy, family, affection and love from working group and women working with policemen did not find any appreciation and encouragement from even family, friends and colleagues. When looked at the self esteem needs which are the achievements, awards, promotions, dominance, prestige and independent status are very far away from women in police. Very few women are at higher ranks in police department and their promotion is very slow. Women cannot reach at the self actualisation stage where they realise their personal potential, self fulfillment and seek personal growth. If motivation is driven by the existence of unsatisfied needs then it is worthwhile for authorities to understand and prioritise those needs which are the more important for employees.

4. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research methodology was used to investigate the issues. For the data collection in-depth interviews were conducted in three police stations of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Questionnaires

were designed as semi-structured interview guide. Two different types of interview guides were developed for male and female respondents. 60 to 90 minutes interviews were conducted on the place where respondents felt comfortable and easy to talk. Total six (06) in-depth interviews were conducted including three (03) female and three (03) male police personels from Margalla Police Station, Ramna Police Station and Women Police Stations in Islamabad.

5. IMPORTANCE AND NEED OF WOMEN POLICE

The importance of women in policing is very obvious to cater women issues. As women constitute half of the population in Pakistan, it is essential to include an equitable number of women into the police to represent women needs and issues in policing, and to fulfill the duty of police as mentioned in the Police Order 2002. The importance of women in policing is well recognised within the police department of Pakistan. The current study also reported that both male and female police officers are well aware of the importance of women in policing. To respond women issues, women induction is necessary to both general police stations and only women police stations on permanent basis. Both men and women police report that women inclusion is necessary both into the separate women police station and men police station on permanent basis. Women police is essential to deal with, and to handle women related cases within the police station, Women are also an active part of mobs therefore, it is necessary to have women police on permanent basis to each police station. It is also create hurdles to deployed women from the women police station when needed as it consume so much time to get permission from higher authority, which caused delays in dealing the situation timely. Police men from Margalla reported that in the absence of women police it is difficult for men police to deal with women, within the police station and during patrolling and raids etc. The existing number of women police is reported to be insufficient in both general and women police station as men police reported that the number of women police should be increased at least 3 times of the existing number in Margalla police station. At present there is only one police woman performing duty on permanent basis. Similarly in Ramna police station a woman police reported that at present there are three police women performing duty, deployed from women police station; however the need for women police is greater. The number of women police in the said police station should be increased at least to 9 police women. The number of police women in women police station Islamabad is also reported to be insufficient, as two women police respondents reported that at present 22 police women are performing duty but the need for police women is greater than the existing number. The required number of police women in the said police station is at least 60 on permanent basis.

6. NEEDS OF WOMEN POLICE

- a. *DUTY TIMINGS AND WORKING HOURS*: During research, duty timings were reported flexible for police women than police men, however, mostly it depended upon the situation. There was no regular system of work time table. Some days their duty timings extended to 16-18 hours. Another issue was emergency calls and duties which was also very problematic for police women and these emergency duties always with order to report within no time. All these timings and duty hour issues affected police women more than police men. These kind of long duty hours negatively impact their family and children, as reported by the respondents, for weeks they do not see their children awake. Both policemen and policewomen raised the issue of insufficient leaves. Especially police women had to give many explanations for even granted leaves in a year.
- b. *PAY SCALE AND PROMOTION PROCEDURES*: The procedure of promotion was reported same for police men and police women, the opinion from male respondents was that the process of promotion is not discriminatory with women. However, women respondents reported that they are facing some ways discrimination in promotion, although the procedure in the police department is same but police women are not promoted as early as police men promoted, they report that police men through linkages, friendships, bribery and approach got promotions. One of the women police reported that she joined the police force in 1981 as a constable, and after 30 year she was promoted to head constable while her men colleagues of that time were Sub-Inspector Sis and ASIs. Police women showed a kind of dissatisfaction with her job in police department.
- c. *HEALTH AND MATERNITY LEAVES*: Women police have 90 days maternity leaves, as they reported, these are enough, but issue was that total ten thousands rupees deducted in case of maternity leaves which is pick and drop allowance. This deduction negatively affected their monthly domestic expenditures. Female respondent reported that government should increase salaries during the months of maternity leave as the expenditures increase, rather they deduct from salaries. No proper medical facilities were available to both police men and police women. There was no health insurance and even no dispensary or first aid treatment equipment in police stations for staff. Most importantly, there was no facility of daycare center for the employee's children. Police women said that they remained very worried about their children. Women police reported

that they are constantly thinking and worried about their children when they are on duty in general police stations, as there is no daycare center available.

- d. *INFRASTRUCTURAL NEEDS*: Police station as the first contact point has a crucial role in protecting human right and preventing crimes. Keeping in mind its importance, police stations need to be equipped and provided with adequate infrastructure for proper functioning. The respondents reported that both men and women police face a lot of problems within the police station which are affecting their performance. There is no facility available when they go out for investigation, like transport, travel expenses, no petty cash, food expenses they do all this by their own. There was also shortage of stationery, fuel for patrolling, there was only 300 liter fuel allocated for whole month which is not sufficient. According to the respondents to meet these expenses sometime they demand money from the public, which negatively impact the image of police as whole. The unavailability of pick and drop service is reported to be the most severe problem for both genders, it negatively impacted the performance of women police more than men police. There is unavailability of separate washrooms for women staff in police stations. There was no staff room or rest room for whole staff. In this case police women suffer more as the police men feel easy anywhere in police station. Women respondent said that they feel uncomfortable and it takes away their sense of privacy. It is very important to have these facilities as in the absence of these facilities; reducing efficiency of women police and also restricting other women to join the police force. Majority of the respondents reported that police is not a suitable profession for women because of inadequate separate arrangement and facilities and social pressures.

7. CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN POLICE

- a. *POLICE MEN PERCEPTION ABOUT POLICE WOMEN*: Perception of both men and women police regarding women police is reported to be positive. Both men and women police were of the view that women police should perform duties such as patrolling, raids, desk job. Women can perform all these jobs but it should be within the 8 hour duty timings. Women police reported that male colleagues give them respect and accept their views and suggestions. Women police reported that they never feel harassed from their own colleagues, however most of the time they feel being harassed from the public.

Interestingly both men and women police were having very positive perception regarding women police, but when asked do they recommend their own female family member to join the police, both men and women police were of the view that they will not recommend their own female family member to join the police except from one woman police respondent. One other reason for this can also be due to the negative perception of the police present within the public. It is imperative for the police, in the prevalent deteriorating law and order situation; to become gender responsive, not only through induction of more women, but also by changing of the overall behaviour and attitude within the department.

- b. *GENERAL PEOPLE PERCEPTION ABOUT WOMEN WORKING IN POLICE:* Respondents said that initially it was very difficult for them to join police force. Family, friends and relatives were not in the favor of this profession, but now they have at least positive views about their job. Over all the perception about women police is not good. Women police reported that due to no pick and drop they have to travel in public transport which is very problematic, they face harassment from the public and the public most of the time also pass negative comments on them. Secondly due to this issue they are unable to come on duty on time and return home as well.
- c. *IMPACT OF POLICE SERVICE ON THEM AND THEIR FAMILY:* Women police reported that after joining the police now they are more confident, bold, fearless, and patient now, their exposure and mobility has raised now which create a positive change in their lives. Women police also reported that it is very difficult to manage both household and job responsibilities, they are facing double burden of both job and household responsibility, they feel tired and stressed while managing both responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

Women employment in public jobs is evident to be very low worldwide. As equal human being and having equal rights women are not considered equal and not given equal chances in society as given to men. In Pakistan majority of institutions are dominated by men. Historically the department of police remains male dominated, women in police have low participation. Currently, there is very low participation of women in police force and even it is not a representative number of half of the population. Due to the socio-cultural norms and religious beliefs women always have been discouraged to join the police force, as it is considered unconventional for women. On the other hand, the department working conditions are more protective of the male needs and interest than women. In the police stations, there is

lack of even basic needs for women working in police station, e.g. duty timings, promotions, leaves and infrastructural need, those who joined police force are also facing many challenges that affect their professional performance and also affect their personal lives.

The main challenges for women police are those prejudices which exist among the men of their family, friends, relatives and finally among their male colleagues and superiors. In Pakistani society police department is still considered not suitable for women. Because police department is considered largely male oriented profession and women are strongly discouraged to join the police force as a career. The perceptions about police women among the general public is not good and women are discouraged to join the police department. Although there is a substantial awareness, regarding the present and potential contribution of women police within the male police personnel, but they do not consider the environment suitable for women. A change in the mindset of the society is essential, if the women are to play their role in the law enforcement department. In order to establish a citizen centric police department it is essential to induct an equitable number of female into the police, and to respond to the needs and problems of women police within police department, especially within the police stations.

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