

OCCUPATIONAL CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIAN WOMEN POLICE

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Abstract

Occupational challenges refer to situations in which an employee must demonstrate his aptitude for or proficiency at a given job. In a police job, the work of policing is difficult and stressful. Anyone who aspires to work in law enforcement must be ready to deal with a variety of professional obstacles, such as long workdays and unpredictable shifts, many of which take place at night. This profession is more challenging for women workforce than men physically and mentally. These are challenges limiting the women police from their profession. This study discusses the present professional challenges confront by women police and the employment prominence of women in Indian police. The finding of this study reveals those women workforces are still facing problems like working conditions, work life balance, and gender discrimination. There are a lot of areas that need improvement within the Indian women police force. This is an indication that there is still a lot of work to be done on making the Indian women police force more positive and productive.

Key words:- Occupational Challenges, Women Police, Work-life Balance, Gender Discrimination, Working Conditions.

Occupation is nothing but a job or profession handled by an employee. Challenges mean an activity or circumstance that puts one's skill to the test. So, occupational challenges mean an employee proves his talent or skill in a job in a particular situation.

Policemen are an asset to the nation and they have to do their duties with no time limits and need to work day and night. Nowadays there aren't any job areas untouched by women. Women make up a modest but growing proportion of police personnel. The police department

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has already acknowledged the advantages of hiring, developing, and elevating more female officers.

An increasing understanding of some distinctive and valuable professional skills that women frequently offer to law enforcement is one of the factors driving the encouraging trend toward building a more equal public safety force. The potential of law enforcement to have a positive influence on the communities they serve is thought to be enhanced by these characteristics women police are proving more capable and responsible in handling the defence sectors. They can easily handle emotional situations patiently related to victims. They are more communicative and empathetic. This is why most of the juvenile and women-related cases were handled by the women police themselves. Besides, these advantages they feel some kind of awkwardness in their professional life. As compared to their male counterparts, Indian women police reported higher levels of anxiety and depression. Women workforces are more stressed while handling their work environment with many cases of violence and more physical and psychological harassment. As a result, they work in a place where they are the minority. These are challenges limiting the women police from their profession. This study discusses the present professional challenges confront by women police.

Literature Review

(Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020) studies about the job satisfaction and work life balance of women employees working in the IT sector. A balanced work life can provide a satisfied and

productive performance on the part of women employees.

(S.Kachapur, 2018) has studied the problems faced by women police constables regarding work life balance in the north-eastern police range of Karnataka state. Identification of complications regarding the family balance of women police constables and the relation between work life balance to their family's cooperative attitude are the main objectives of the study. Primary data were collected through a multi-stage cluster sampling method. Families have a positive attitude towards the profession of women police. Family acceptance gives confidence to the women police to continue their profession seriously and effectively handling work life balance.

(Bhagyalaxmi. M and Ishwara. P, 2016) studied about quality of working life of women police in Karnataka district. The objective of the study focused on the factors determining the quality of work life, and QWL enjoyed by Karnataka women police and to identify the policies framed to them by the Karnataka police department. The study was conducted through primary and secondary data. The study stated that the lack of women workforce leads to a high level of job stress than men. They are moderately enjoying the work life quality provided by the department. The study reveals that in some situations, women police are not able to cope with their colleagues and superiors.

(Suvarna Joshi, 2015) explains the gender perception of Indian women police. Both male and female police samples were collected from the union

territory in New Delhi. Women police are facing male authority, poor working conditions, and tight working hours. The study reveals some vague concepts imprinted in the mind of society, men, and even in women police regarding discrimination. Only some measures can be taken to improve their job satisfaction but not completely eradicate discrimination.

(Adnan Jamil and Anwaar Mohyuddin, 2015) has examined the common issues faced by women police officers in Islamabad. The random sampling method was used to select the samples and data was collected through interview and observation methods. The study found that lack of transportation facilities, accommodation, poor work life, acceptance and discrimination on the part of co-workers and society, etc make women police more uncomfortable and dissatisfied.

(Bharathi et al., 2015) has explained the challenges regarding IT women employees' official and private life and the maintenance of work life balance. The study found out that extra duty and working hours, traveling difficulties, commitment to new assignments, etc make their work life more complex. Flexible working hours, understanding family partners and a friendly working environment can maintain a better balance between work and personal life.

(S. Rajesh & Manoj P K, 2015) explained through their research regarding the challenges and work life problems faced by women employees in a difficult industrial situation. Low wages, job insecurity, poor working condition, a

shift in work, problems in work life balance, job stress, and lack of legal protection are affecting the job dissatisfaction of women employees in the industrial sector. These factors are directly affecting the performance and satisfaction of women employees.

(R. Balaji, 2014) aimed to study the factors and effects of emotional anguish and happiness related to work life balance and stress of married working women. Married women are facing WFC (Work-Family Conflict) while maintaining a balance between work and personal life. Proper implementation of work life balance policies of management can improve job performance and satisfaction of them.

(Zahid Ali Channar et al., 2011) through this study, the researcher explained the gender discrimination problems faced by the workforce in private and public sector health and education departments. It measured the discrimination impact had on job satisfaction, stress level, motivation, and interest in the job of the workforce. Female employees are facing more discrimination than male employees in these two sectors. This discrimination created a high level of job stress and dissatisfaction, and reduced motivation, commitment, and interest in women employees.

(S.N. Sabat and S. Mishra, 2010) examined the importance of women police in the fundamental changes in the police department. The objective of the study is to identify the common difficulties and problems faced by women police all over the world and the

attitude of society towards women police regarding their role in a paradigm shift. Through well-defined policies, proper supervision and communication of the department can support and encourage women police to make them equipped.

Research Gap

Regarding the occupational challenges faced by women police in India, limited studies have been done. To comprehend the factors, some research studies have provided some insight through literature study. As a result, the purpose of this study was to theoretically investigate the professional or occupational challenges faced by Indian women police.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To examine the employment prominence of women in Indian police
- To identify the various occupational challenges faced by women police

Importance of the Study

Policing is a challenging and demanding job. Anyone who is called to the policing profession will have to be prepared to face many occupational challenges, including long hours and irregular shifts that are often at night. Indian women in the police force are doubly challenged by being not only female but also members of an ethnic minority group. Apart from these two distinctive factors, they may find themselves in a situation where their identity as a woman clashes with their identity as an officer of the law. Because

they are women, they are often at a disadvantage and may face difficulties in raising their rank. They also have to cope with many gender-related issues such as harassment and assault. So, the present study analyses the occupational challenges faced by Indian women police through the working condition, work life balance, and gender discrimination.

Methodology

The study is purely conceptual and theoretical in nature. The methodology employed in this research is based on literature regarding women's police culture, policies, protection, etc in India. The secondary data was collected through sources including academic papers, newspaper reports, publications, websites, and survey reports.

Variables under the Study

1. Working condition
2. Work life balance
3. Gender discrimination

Employment Prominence of Women in Indian Police

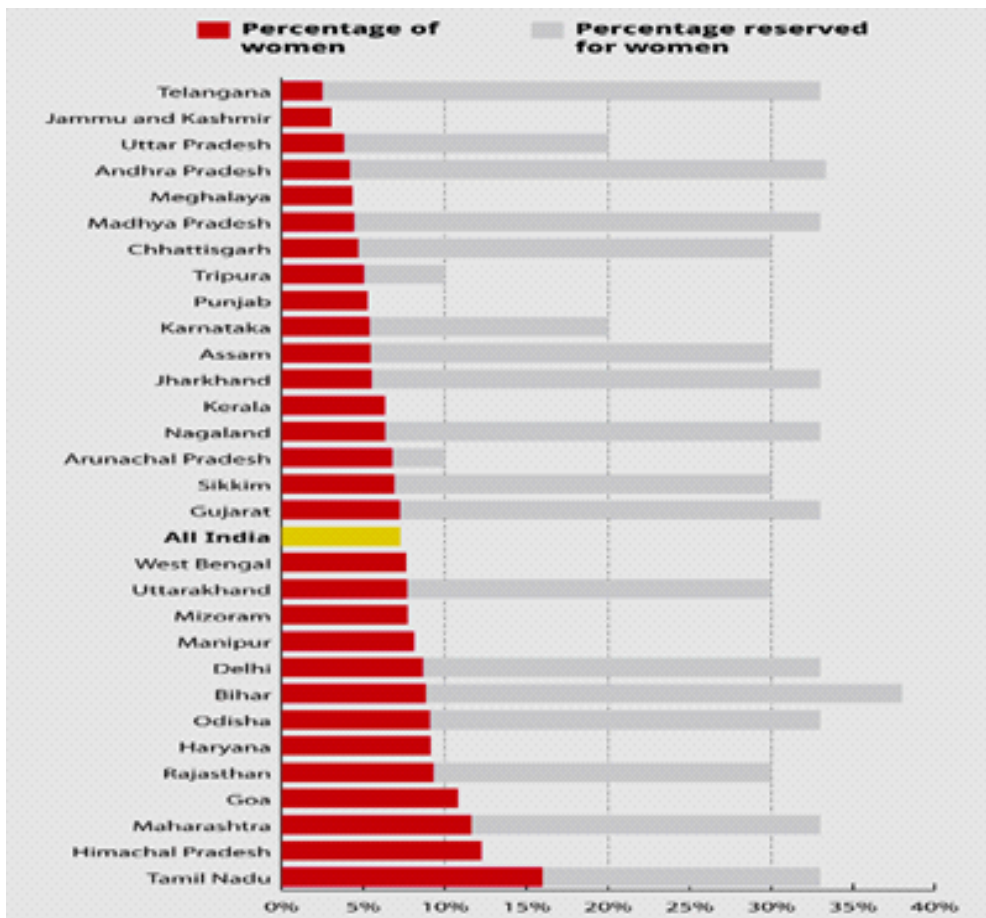
According to the most basic reasoning, policewomen are better qualified to deal with the policing needs of women and children. They possess attributes such as patience, empathy, kindness, tolerance, sacrifice, and others that are extremely valuable in democratic policing. Women are also less prone to use excessive force, which means that third-degree and custodial violence is less common. More women are also needed because several recent laws have mandated that specific police activities be performed solely by female officers.

According to a Ministry of Home Affairs advice from 2013, each police station must have three female sub-inspectors and 10 female constables to staff women helpdesks. Despite this, women make up a small percentage of the workforce. Policing has long been regarded as a male-dominated profession.

Women’s roles in the police force have been progressively growing. Every case

of sexual assault must now be registered and investigated by a female police officer under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and other significant criminal statutes. A woman’s arrest and search must be carried out only by a woman. Women police officers are seen to be better at dealing with juvenile delinquents because they are more empathetic and communicative with children. States are solely responsible for

Figure 1
Percentage of Women Police across the State



Source: Bureau of Police Research and Development Data on Police Organisations, January 1, 2017

the upkeep of police forces, regardless of their constitution or overall strength.

Most states have a reservation policy that inducts roughly 33 per cent of women into the force; nevertheless, their recruiting policy does not compensate for the large shortage that has built up over time due to their low intake. The 'All-Women Police Station' paradigm, which was introduced with great fanfare in many states, has failed miserably. As a result, each police station should ideally have roughly one-third of its staff be women to simplify reporting of any woman-related crime. Women officers are more effective than men because they use less force and communicate better with the general public. Each station, however, must have enough infrastructure including separate toilets and facilities for men and women. This will not only make stations more accessible to the average woman, but it will also make them more affordable (The new Indian express, 2019).

Women police stations in India as on 2005 to 2011 from 298 to 442. In January 2017, the bureau of police research and development data poll organisation revealed statistical data regarding women police in the different states of India.

In the year 2020, the Hindu newspaper surveyed higher ranks in Indian women police. States have a compulsory reservation for women police from 10 per cent to 33 per cent, but still, not one of the states achieved its goals. The gazetted rank of women police was less than 8.7 per cent. For instance, the largest percentage of women in the civil police, 25 per cent, was found in Bihar, whereas

the lowest percentage, 3.3 per cent, was found in J&K. In the majority of States, there are police positions set aside for women. Reservations make up anything from 10 per cent to 33 per cent of the total. However, not a single State has achieved the objective. Only 12 per cent of the police force was made up of women.

Occupational Challenges Faced by Indian Women Police

Women police are one of the strong pillars of the Indian policing system. But at the same time, they are facing some occupational issues. The main challenges faced by women police while performing their duties are;

1. Working Condition

Women empowerment is considered one of the priorities in the police department and introducing new initiatives to make the country more comfortable for women. Unfortunately, a different opinion arises when that is related to women personnel in the police department. Serving as a women police is challenging, and it becomes even harder when workplace conditions are not compromising. Most police stations are not providing separate bathroom facilities to female cops. They can't manage personal matters because of rigid duty times. Sometimes department failed to maintain at least a woman police in charge of the night duty. They are unable to handle women's complaints that register at the stations. This is happening because of the shortage of female cops in the department. No separate room is provided for them if they have night duty at the police station. Mostly Women police

are generally confined to office duties like keeping registers, recording FIRs, and attending complaints. It's hard to get a weekly break in tight schedules.

2. Work-life Balance

The degree of priorities between social and work life is termed as work-life balance. Work life balance is a psychological state of a person. Its imbalance may worst affect their personal as well as career life. When it comes to women it is very hard to handle it successfully, especially in the case of women police. Women police are not often getting work-life balance in their field. Due to hectic work, they can't take a break for spending time with family. Imbalance in work life cannot compensate with salary or promotion. The higher authority has to take care of their employees' mental status. Recently work life balance training programs were started by the police department for women police (The Hindu, 2021).

3. Gender Discrimination

Discrimination means disparate treatment of people based on ethnicity, age, sex, or inability. Our constitution guarantees equal rights to men and women, but some discrepancies exist. Generally, gender discrimination is spread everywhere including in workplaces, and mostly in favour of men in many areas. Women will be mostly the victim of this kind of gap and it will badly affect their mental health and job dissatisfaction also. In policing also, the gender gap can be visibly identifiable. Only 7.8 per cent of women are working in police departments in India, out of

which 90 per cent are held as constables and merely 1 per cent hold supervisory positions (status of Police in India report, 2019).

In recent years India has seen a significant and beneficial shift in the position of women in society. Women status has shifted from conventional homemakers to professionals are a result of the industrial revolution, deregulation, and globalization (Prashanti Upadhyay, 2016). The majority of men police dominated the police service in the union territory of New Delhi. Women police were discriminated against undervaluing their performance and being ignored for getting any rewards as promotions and incentives (Suvarna Joshi, 2015). Lower ranked female police could not avail of childcare leave for children aged under 18 years old for two years to raise the child. Such benefits are only available to women IPS officers.

Findings and Suggestions

Acceptance of women in the police department can motivate them to work efficiently with higher satisfaction. Children and women feel more comfortable and secure when there are female police officers on duty. Appreciating the efforts of women police shows the model of gender equality and it influences prospective women police. Providing necessary facilities by removing occupational problems to them can improve job satisfaction and commitment to the department. Timely evaluation of women police stations and feedback systems can be a benefit for their future performance.

Conclusion

Policing is a multifaceted occupation involving many different types of law enforcement work, including emergency services work and criminal investigations. It is well known that male police officers are dominating the police department. The

result of the study shows that there are a lot of areas for improvement within the Indian women police force. This is an indication that there is still a lot of work to be done on making the Indian women police force more positive and productive.

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