



MOTIVATION AND EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN POLICE PERSONNEL: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract: Women serve as a valuable asset to our society as they play many crucial roles in society. They contribute to social, economic, and cultural development as well. Their roles are caregivers, educators, professionals, leaders, etc. and on top of this, they raise their families, and also empower their communities. Their involvement in the education sector, job sector, government, and law and order enhance social balance, and as well as inclusive growth and development. Women with adequate power can even facilitate equality, justice and social peace. Therefore, it is highly imperative to identify the potential of women to create a progressive, safe, and equal society. The careers of women are experiencing a change because there is an influx of women taking up some jobs where male jobs were deemed dominant. This study is an analysis of why women are opting to work in a male-centric profession, like the police (Sahgal, 2007). Balance between life and work is a significant concern among working women in the modern world, and working in the police force is a challenging task indeed in a traditionally male-dominated occupation (Mangaiarkarasi and Lavanya, 2019). The involvement of women in law and order is also a primary and significant problem. The number of women involved is minimal due to gender inequality in India. Women are also going through different and unique challenges when entering this career. However, the attitude of society is gradually shifting and females are also entering the police career. Their choice of getting into the police profession is driven by different and multiple desires or expectations such as they desire to prove their abilities and strengths, and also physical power. There are also numerous attempts by the government to attract women to take up police as a profession. The research is an attempt to scan through the motivation and ambitions of women in regard to the police career. The study will investigate and analyse the multidimensional experiences and motivation of women in policing and will also dwell on the factors and issues that influence their joining, career and advancement in the police career. The research will also propose some actions to alleviate the situation of women police force.

Keywords: Patriarchal society, Care-takers, Law enforcement, Experiences, and Motivations

Introduction

Police is a career that has fewer female representatives. Women police officers have to cope with numerous problems, starting with the possibility of gaining access to leadership roles to cultural prejudices and sexism. Over the past many years, many women have chosen the police profession as a career option. As work environments and skills are evolving, female officers are focusing higher in terms of their career aspirations and are taking on a wider range of roles and duties. Article 16 in our Indian constitution denotes that there should be equal opportunity in matters of public employment (Constitution of India, 1950), and so in police organization. Many efforts have been made, and many policies have been implemented; significant progress has been made, but still further action is required to remove gender disparities in this profession. Worldwide, law enforcement agencies have noted the urgency to increase diversity across all areas of policing, and they are also working to attract women talent. They are implementing many frameworks that support women's recruitment and deployment across a wide spectrum of roles (International Criminal Police Organization, 2023).

In India, Kerala was the first state to have women police officers in the Travancore Royal Police in the year 1933. After that, many other states recruited women police officers, and this began only after Independence. It was in 1972 that the first woman police officer, Dr. Kiran Bedi, was appointed (CRPF, 2023) by the Delhi Police (Rao, 2019). Violence against women in India is increasing day by day, and it is very important to cope with it. In India, the brutal gang rape and murder of a young woman in Delhi in the year 2012 brought to the fore many dangers in daily life for women, and it has also led to calls for greater attention to the issue of violence against women. It also calls for the need for more and more women in policing (CRPF, 2023). The number of women officers since then has slightly increased.

A police job demands physical strength, fearlessness, and other qualities. Now, women have been participating in these career opportunities successfully from last ten years. This is not the only reason but they are also performing better than males (Natarajan, 2016). The women in the police profession adds diversity in the police profession; it also improves law enforcement, particularly when handling issues that are sensitive like domestic violence, rape cases, robbery, sexual harassment as well as other crimes against women. Women police officers can also bring about

positive change. Departments with more women may offer better opportunities like childcare, night duty, and sick leave policies, which benefit anyone with children and those who need time off for medical reasons (Prussel & Lonsway,2001)

The employment of women involves a variety of benefits and useful experiences. Equity in policing personnel supports the global mission to generate real equality and also independence for women. It can generate employment and other services (United Nations, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

A sociological theory is a set of ideas that explain how society works (Haralambos & Holborn, 2007). So it is very mandatory to relate this research to the theoretical perspective to understand it better. The detailed explanation of the theoretical framework is as follows:

Structural Functionalism Theory: Structural Functionalism theory is related to thinkers like Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. They viewed society as a complex system that is made up of interdependent structure and these structures perform functions necessary for the stability and smooth, effective functioning of the whole society. Talcott Parsons was deeply influenced by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. According to Structural Functionalism, society is a complex composition of several stratified layers, like a machine with its moving parts (Parsons, 1951). Another Structural functionalist, Robert King Merton, pointed out that social processes often have many functions (Merton, 1968).

Structural functionalism is a theoretical understanding of society that views social systems as a collective to fulfill society's needs. This theory is about social roles, and according to this framework, society is made up of various complex parts (family, education, government), and each part has its specific function. These parts work together to maintain stability and order, as well as solidarity. Structural functionalism also defines that everyone has a role to play or a function to perform in order to support the structure of society. In the context of Policing, women enter the police force to contribute to the safety and order in society. But on the other hand, there is role conflict that hinders their motivation level. It downs their expectations and motivation. “Role Conflict” is the concept that focuses on the contradictory role expectations of women in police personnel. Parsons and Merton are the main supporters of this theory.

Feminist theory: The Feminist approach provides a significant sociological lens to understand how gender inequality is generated and exists in society. This theory examines how patriarchal structures of societies and cultural expectations shape women's experiences in daily life. Feminist theory is based on the theme to achieve equal treatment and equal opportunities for women. It is essential in terms of learning the experiences of women in policing. Feminist sociologists such as Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Betty Friedan (1963), and Bell Hooks (1984) concentrated on the fact that women subordination is not a biological issue but a social one. Another argument of this theory is that gender differentiations lie in the process of socializations and power relations. This theory focuses on the way women are subjected to patriarchal arrangements at the workplace. All these make women less available to resources, opportunities and power to make choices. The feminist theory can be used to comprehend the challenges and obstacles of women police officers in an integrated way. This theory looks at the ways in which the structure of patriarchal families and the cultural expectations influence the life of women within their daily life. This theory is in favor of equal pay, which is equal work. It also helps to promote and benefit women equally in the police (Beauvoir, 1952; Friedan, 1963; Hooks, 1984).

Review of Literature: Connectivity

Randhawa, G., and Narang, K. (2013) studied the issue of employment and challenges of women in the police department. The research article offered that there is under utilisation of police women because of gender discrimination. Besides, women are ignorant as well. They are bullied in the place of work. It has discussed in the study that, men and women possess varying personality traits and they should be utilized adequately. There should be proper understanding and care. The policies which should be developed and strictly enforced by the government must ensure real equality in the work place.

Gamesan, S., and Sukaya, L. (2018) analyzed the degree of women police satisfaction in police departments. The researchers discovered that a favorable climate within the police departments can result in more women police officers. It is also capable of increasing the motivation of other women. Also proposed in the study is the idea of making workers feel that they belong to family or team as one of the best approaches of keeping women police satisfied.

The book by Singh (2019) had touched upon the aspirations and experiences of the policewomen in Punjab, India. The women in the Punjab police have a vision of doing something meaningful to the community. They show their capabilities and potential in a field that is dominated by men. They have a desire to change the gender roles and stereotypes. They want to serve the nation.

Mangaiarkarasi, S., & Lavanya Latha, K. (2019), examined different motivating factors in women to join the police force. The study examined that there are many factors to choose police as a career, like job security, power and prestige, authority, and many more. The study has also suggested the need to increase the number of women in the police, as it is very low compared to their male counterparts. The study has explored that there are many benefits that are given to women, so women should be strongly encouraged to join the police force.

Gowtham, R. & Jayasudha S.M. (2023) examined the perception and satisfaction of women police officers towards their respective jobs. The research found that a happy and healthy environment at the workplace can keep women police staff motivated. It is also very helpful for them if they are provided with work near their workplace and areas. It will provide a sense of belongingness, and it will also be a better opportunity for them. It will also aim at their personal development. It will give them commitment, motivation, and a learning atmosphere.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine motivational factors behind choosing a police career.
- To assess the lived experiences of women police officers in the police force.

Research Methodology

This research paper is a totally descriptive and qualitative data sources-based. This study is based upon the secondary sources such as books, published reports, articles, research papers, newspapers, and websites, etc. This helps in achieving a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Factors shaping women's motivations & aspirations to pursue police jobs

Women enter the police personnel for several reasons, as it reflects both personal aspirations and broader social trends. One of the major common motivations or aspirations is the desire to serve and protect society and country. Motivation for women is a crucial aspect of encouraging gender

inclusiveness and promoting equality within law enforcement. Women join the police for a variety of reasons, which are as follows:

- **Stereotype busting in society:** Female police are a difficult phenomenon. They will be able to disprove the stereotypes and may question the presence of traditional gender roles by occupying a position in the police personnel. They are able to demonstrate that the courage in them cannot be gender-related. All these may also make other women dream of being in those positions. They are able to act as role model to other women as well.
- **Want to serve and protect the country:** A large number of women also have a feeling of responsibility to their nation or country. They desire to play a part in the development of their community. They desire to struggle against crime, in particular against women in such instances as rapes, sexual harassment, domestic violence, human trafficking, etc.
- **Empowerment and independence:** Women's empowerment and independence is also a desire of women who enroll in the police. They are given new opportunities by joining the police force. They will be able to equip themselves with a male-dominated career. They are able to become self-sufficient and better their life.
- **Security and benefits:** Policing work provides the female with competitive remuneration and a secure job. There are also several benefits, such as healthcare, maternity leave, retirement plans and pensions, among others, that come with this job. These are all the benefits that give women long-term security.
- **Influence of role model and family:** There are instances where women have been motivated by family members who are working in the law enforcement field, or certain women who have managed to be successful in this field. Women police officers can also be influenced by the family factor and are even able to act as ideals to other women, as well.
- **Government policies and quotas:** Now, our Indian constitution has made affirmative action policies and special quotas for women staff in the police force. It is a significant and encouraging contribution for women who apply for this job. Now the government is

designing many more programs and policies to improve the scenario of women in the police force.

- **Training, mentorship programs:** Women often face many difficulties in physical fitness requirements and training environments. They are always tailored to male standards. This at times leads to a feeling of being marginalized and even frustrations in them. This contributes to a lot of women being strong-willed and determined in their ambitions.
- **Support systems:** Women are also motivated by senior female staff members. They also feel supported by those senior female staff members. The presence of senior women in cells can also motivate them, and they can also guide the other newcomers, too, in their police careers.
- **Skill development:** Female police officers often receive special training in areas like victim support, community policing, and handling domestic violence, women trafficking cases, and other cases related to women. So female police tend to have a unique advantage. Moreover, they are emotionally capable of handling all these cases as they have a deep understanding of all these things.

So we can say that there are many aspirations for women to join police departments. They can have a bright future and scope as well. There are many opportunities for them to serve their country, job security, respect and honor, and many more. The backbone of the women police force's satisfaction is respect for the officers and the job they perform. In every interaction with their departments, women police should be treated with courtesy and interest. An easy avenue for women police to discuss problems with upper management should be maintained and carefully monitored. Even if management cannot meet all the demands of women police, showing workers that they are being heard and putting honest dedication into compromising will often help to improve morale. (Ganapathi et al., 2009)

Professional Experiences in Policing

The role of women in law enforcement has evolved over the last few decades. But the experiences of women in police forces remain under-researched in many aspects. Although significant policies and programs have been made to include and integrate women into police work. But it is seen that

their experiences are always shaped by institutional and societal gender dynamics. There are many challenging experiences for women police officers, including gender discrimination, sexual harassment, career advancement barriers, etc., that impact female representation in police culture and work-life balance.

Gender discrimination and bias: Many women experience gender-based discrimination and partiality by their seniors and colleagues in the department. Discrimination and bias against gender: They are not being promoted, they are not being assigned fieldworks among others. They also face the biased stereotypes regarding their possibilities and abilities in the sphere of law enforcement. They also undergo numerous challenges because the society regards them negatively.

There is harassment and a hostile work environment: A good number of the women police officers experience harassment at the workplace and it is, not only by their fellow police officers but also by the people. Women may be prejudged and much more, in a society that is traditionally male-dominated as was the case in India. All these are likely to demotivate them and also worsen their abilities. They might not be in a position to grow in such an environment.

Finding a Juggle between work and personal Life: Female police officers, like any other working woman, may experience the same issue: the problem between the family and the work. Police work can make their lives hard due to the long and unpredictable working time. They may face dual burdens as well and face difficulty with the societal expectation that women should manage household duties, and work can also create additional stress.

Impact of societal expectations: The societal expectations and family burden can raise their stress and anxiety levels. All this can add pressure on women as they have to uphold traditional norms and culture as well. They should follow the norms of modesty and obedience. It can lead to a conflict between duty and home duties.

Lack of infrastructure and facilities: Many police stations often face many issues due to a lack of basic facilities like separate washrooms and toilets, changing rooms, a canteen, and accommodations, which can be the main difficulties for women police officers in their jobs. Many women officers face these types of difficulties in their workplaces. So it is very difficult for them to adjust to these types of situations.

Workplace violence and harassment: Women police may experience violence while working in sensitive crime areas. They may face many difficulties and risks, threats in cases like drug cases, trafficking, and murder cases. They may face harassment while dealing with all these types of cases. All these things can lead them to stress and anxiety.

Bias in promotions: Despite their qualifications, knowledge, and skills, women staff may experience hurdles in their promotions as male police officers than male police officers. The number of women police officers is very low in India. In India, where there is a patriarchal and male-centric society, women are looked down on. It is very difficult when it comes to advancing in their careers. As it is thought that women are not suited for higher positions or top field roles.

Measures to Address the Challenges

The backbone of every job is to respect the employees and the job they perform. Job satisfaction is mandatory for a healthy work environment. In every interaction with their departments and stations women police should be treated with courtesy, interest, and equality. Here are some measures to cope with the challenges, which are as follows:

- **Policy reforms:** Over the last few years, the government has made efforts to create a more gender-sensitive environment related to women staff. It includes recruitment policies, preparation, and other mechanisms. The government has brought many improvements to make suitable changes, such as reservation policies and many more.
- **Welfare measures and infrastructure improvement:** Many Initiatives and programs, such as child care facilities, flexible working hours, are being brought. Problems related to the washrooms and toilets are being solved. Many transitions, like separate toilets, maternity leaves, leave sanctions, etc., are being brought into the women's cells in police stations, and those are helping to support women officers. These things are creating a more inclusive work environment. It is also being ensured that the police stations are not only equipped with the necessary and proper facilities that accommodate the needs of the female police officers.
- **More women in policing:** A lot of steps are being pursued to get more women to the police, especially in rural areas. This resulted in the representation being improved and also

the empowerment of the women as well. Women are increasingly demanding an opportunity in the police department.

- **Mentorship Programs:** Mentorship programs are also on the rise, and guidance and counseling services are being offered to the new joiners. Appropriate and open-minded platforms are being promoted. This is a supportive system being launched to assist new entrants in the police departments.
- **Training and awareness:** To improve the inclusiveness of women in the police force, the police are introducing awareness programs through gender sensitivity training programs to handle women's issues in the police. All police personnel have been scheduled to undergo sensitivity training to deal with biases, any form of harassment, and to make the department more inclusive.
- **Gender inclusiveness:** Although this may require the application of gender related policies, this will help in providing equal opportunities in terms of promotions and postings at working places. It is able to deal with any kind of gender discrimination within the police personnel. This treatment will aid in the reduction of gender inequality as well as create a healthy atmosphere.

Conclusion

The police force women are very important in making the police force more effective, diverse, and trustworthy. They can introduce new insights and expertise that can be used to develop a balanced approach. Females are also more flexible in delicate matters concerning domestic violence and the protection of children. They can help in breaking the stereotypes of gender discrimination. They will be able to promote inclusiveness. The involvement of women in policing can provide a relatively better opportunity, the best facilities, and an institutional behavior that is inclusive, with the assistance of policies and programs. They are able to spearhead a more balanced and efficient police force. The issue of the representation of women in the police department is not only a gender equity issue, but it is also a move towards effective and representative policing. The women personnel are able to contribute to various opinions, such as community-oriented policing methods. They are also capable of increasing the level of sensitivity of the victims of gender-based violence. Women police officers also enhance communication, and they are able to enhance trust-

building towards the marginalized and vulnerable populations. Through constant changes, reformatting, and institutional empowerment, the future of women in the police is bright, and they will always remain part of the future of policing.

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