

CHAPTER IV

ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF WOMEN POLICE

The last quarter of the 20th century constituting the final moments of the old millennium witnessed dramatic changes in the situation and position of Indian women. Now we can see women in every field of work shoulder to shoulder with men. In spite of more than 50 years of independence our country is not free of social evils of crimes such as corruption, terrorism, communalism, crime against women rape, dowry deaths, molestation and all types of sexual exploitation and harassment.

In addition to this, a new trend has developed i.e. stabbing, burning and acid throwing by young men. This is due to from one-sided love or matters relating to money. The girls subjected to this form of crimes had not the slightest idea that by rejecting the advances of a particular youth, their lives would come to an abrupt end. This new form of violence, which has come under the head murder, has been widely criticized by the media. Society in general is baffled in dealing with this form of obnoxious, fearsome love, which is expressed by an youth, if rejected would end the life of the girl or the youth by committing suicide. The scrutiny of all such cases which have happened shows that girl victims are

all students and below 20 years of age and assault of fatal nature have occurred on them in most cases when the girls are on way or returning from school or colleges, in the city area ⁽¹⁾. The tragic incidences of Rinku Patil in Thane City where she was burnt alive in the classroom by her spurned lover and Rupali Bhikaji Patil who was burnt alive by two teen aged boys in Dombivali scared the hearts of people all over India ⁽²⁾.

Kolhapur, Sangli, Karad and in general Western Maharashtra experienced a number of such incidents in the past few years. The most remembering of these were that of Manasi shah of Kagal and Amrita Deshpande of Sangali. Such incidents had sent shock waves throughout the State and widely published in the press⁽³⁾. In such incidences it was found that the society was baffled and had not found a suitable solution to tackle the problem. Wherever households had young girls and boys in the family every one wondered whether their young ones might be a victim or a culprit in the coming future. Though there were many eyewitnesses to such incidences (most of these incidences have happened in a crowded area), very few witnesses have come forward to depose in the court against these desperadoes who have committed a heinous crime.

In a society where relationship between men and women are still grounded in gender inequality the new false image of the modern "liberal" women promoted by sections of the entertainment and mass communication industries has in turn spawned fresh forms of sexual exploitation.

However, such issues have been raised by many voluntary organizations as well as women's organizations⁽⁴⁾. But in a developing country like India the main responsibility falls on the shoulders of police administration and in this context there is a need to study role and functioning of women police.

Women in Police:

Properly recruited, trained and oriented police women will make a significant contribution in actual law enforcement as well as in detective work and in acquiring positive approaches to problems⁽⁵⁾.

The history and working of policewomen in the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. the pioneers in this area, will indicate that many negative bars confronted the women in joining police force. It is relevant to mention that they were appointed not because the police service wanted them, but because women

working for the bettering the conditions for women demanded them ⁽⁶⁾.

The deployment of women in law enforcement has been a controversial issue. Even in a country like the United Kingdom which was a pioneer in this area and had women police since 1920 were described by an English M.P. as an “extravagant eccentricity” upon whose entertainment public money should not be wasted. It would be difficult to find any one now expressing himself as strongly as the M.P. who said in 1920 that “police women had, in taking up this particular work sterilized any maiden modesty they might have had” ⁽⁷⁾.

Historically and traditionally, law enforcement has been considered as a crime repressive task performed by men only. However, the working of policewomen in various countries shows that many policewomen could better perform required responsibilities. In the enforcement phase of the work, policewomen are generally more acceptable to women and children who have been particularly victims of sexual crime. Women police officers find it easier to get leads about the offenders in cases of sexual assaults which male officers have failed to get in interviews because the victims have not much confidence in men ⁽⁸⁾.

The International Congress on "Women in the police service" organized by the International Federation of Senior police officers met at Gimborn castle (West Germany) from 9th to 14th Sept, 1974 under the Chairmanship of Director Mathes, the Lady Head of Criminal police, (the Deputy Head of Criminal Police, West Germany). Countries like U.S.A., Belgium, West Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweeden, France, Australia and United Kingdom attended it ⁽⁹⁾.

The Gimborn Commission Report refers to the address of Professor Traute Schroeder of Heidelberg who said, "A women may be called upon to act in accordance with her own strength and qualifications as is the case for any man. The questions of biology and genetics should not come into it when it is a question of determining whether or not a woman is capable of carrying out her duties ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Following are the various functions expected to be performed by women police in different countries of the world ⁽¹¹⁾.

- 1 Road traffic regulation
- 2 Dealing with women who have or are suspected of having committed offences
- 3 Crime investigation in general
- 4 Handling cases involving vice or sexual offences

- 5 Foot and / or vehicular patrolling
- 6 Social work and child welfare
- 7 Juvenile delinquency case work
- 8 Clerical work
- 9 Telecommunications and related work
- 10 Prosecution duties
- 11 Immigration duties, checks on travelers
- 12 Guarding female prisoners
- 13 Identification including fingerprints work.
- 14 Public relations work
- 15 Police training duties
- 16 Crime Prevention activities
- 17 Crowd control.
- 18 Security
- 19 Protection of female VIPs
- 20 Drug related case work
- 21 Criminal records management
- 22 Administration and guard duties at prison for women
- 23 Technical and / or expert examination work.
- 24 Police drivers
- 25 Police social welfare activities.

Thus, most of the countries have entrusted functions, which are suitable for women police and which befits their stamina. To highlight some of the important among them are road traffic regulation, communication, juvenile and sexual offenses. Women police can perform this function effectively because they can have control over people of any age group. Duties like telecommunications and related work and public relations work are also well performed by women. Women police can have friendly and sympathetic attitude towards people so that they can communicate easily and help police to build a healthy image in society.

Further, taking into consideration women's nature women police can play important role in the cases where women are involved either as a victim or as a convict. For e.g. functions like handling cases involving vice or sexual offences, guarding female prisoners. They can treat women victims sympathetically than policemen. They can investigate in a more thorough way because women victims do not hesitate to talk with women police about the incidents. The way of asking questions is also not rude so women victims can answer fearlessly to their questions. Further, the duty of guarding female prisoners is also entrusted to women police and this has helped to lessen the complaints from society

about maltreatment of women prisoners. Women police can also understand their problems better than policemen. Further, juvenile delinquency cases where young blood is involved women police can play an important role. It is because they treat young boys and girls with less harshness and try to understand their problems. Protection of female VIPs is also an important duty in view of threat to their security.

Women Police In India:

Except in Kanpur, in Uttar Pradesh and in the erstwhile princely State of Travancore who made use of women police since the year 1938 and 1939 respectively, otherwise, women police were unknown in India ⁽¹²⁾.

The partition of India in 1947 in its wake brought endless misery, squalor and moral degradation. The conditions of women were deteriorating. The Indian society was shackled by many social evils like poverty, illiteracy, crime against women like dowry, sexual exploitation, socioeconomic exploitation etc. In such a situation police being a State subject many States in India gradually found the need to induct women in police force so that it could be closer to the society. And thus, the States introduced women in police force one after another.

Following Table No. 4.1 shows the recruiting of women in police in various States of India.

**Table No. 4.1 Showing Recruiting Women Police In
Various States Of India Since 1939-1973**

Sr.No.	Name of the State	Year of establishment
1.	Andrapradesh	1950
2.	Assam	1967
3.	Bihar	1952
4.	Delhi	1948
5.	Gujarat	1948
6.	Hariyana	1966
7.	Jammu Kashmir	1965
8.	Kamataka	1960
9.	Kerala	1939 (First women police station. In Calicut on cot 27.1973
10.	Madhya Pradesh	1959
11.	Maharashtra	1939 (before Independence) 1950 (After independence first started in Poona, Solapur, Raibag, Dist, Kolhapur, Nasik)
12.	Manipur	1961

13.	Meghalaya	1973
14.	Naga land	1968
15.	Orissa	1961
16.	Punjab	1948
17.	Rajasthan	1965
18.	Tamilnadu	1973
19.	Tripura	1961

Source: "Women In Policing" S.K. Gosh, Light and Life Publishers
New Delhi, Jammu, Trivandrum First Edition. 1981

Table No. 4.1 shows that the recruiting of women police in various States of India since 1939 to 1973. It can be observed from the Table that Maharashtra and Kerala are the first States to introduce women police in 1939 i. e. before independence period. Secondly, in 1948 i.e. immediately after independence, three States namely Delhi (U. T.), Gujarat and Punjab started recruiting women police. Thirdly, during the period from 1950 to 1960 four States namely Andhrapradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra (reintroduced) introduced women police. Fourthly, during the period from 1960 to 1970 nine States introduced women police in their respective States such as Assam, Hariyana, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tripura. and Karnataka. Fifthly, after 1970 two

States started recruiting women police namely Meghalaya and Tamilnadu. Lastly three States have yet to recruit women police. Union Territories also lag behind in this.

Duties Of Women Police:

Women police have to perform more or less same duties in all the States of India. Following can be mentioned as duties of Women police in India⁽¹³⁾.

- 1) Help in the investigation of offences involving women and juveniles.
- 2) Assisting the police in tracing missing women and children, keeping watch over the places of ill-fame, recovering minor girls from brothels and escorting them to rescue homes, courts, hospitals, jails and recovery of women and girls involved in abduction and Kidnapping cases.
- 3) Collection of intelligence.
- 4) Interrogation of Juvenile and women offenders undertrials and women witnesses.
- 5) Assisting the police in the investigation of rape case.
- 6) Arrest, search and escort of women and juvenile offenders.
- 7) Security, check on women and their belongings at airports.

- 8) Assisting women and children commuters etc. at airports, big railway stations, bus terminus etc.
- 9) Conduct and search on women on border check posts.
- 10) Looking after women and children in big fairs, festivals and places of pilgrimage.
- 11) Dealing with women agitators and satyagrahis during political and labour demonstrations.
- 12) Keeping order in public meetings and processions.
- 13) VIP and other security duties.
- 14) Family investigations involving women.
- 15) Assisting social organizations and probation officers in the rehabilitation of runaway women and young girls and prostitutes.
- 16) Helping women and children to cross roads.
- 17) Communication, wireless, office record maintenance.
- 18) Police women are also given public relations work.

While discussing these duties with women police as well as men police officers during fieldwork it was observed that performance of these duties by women police is very essential and helpful for police administration⁽¹⁴⁾. Let us discuss some of the important duties among them.

Duty to help in the investigation of offences involving women and juveniles is a very important duty as women police can closely investigate such cases than policemen because women and juveniles offenders can fairly communicate with women police than policemen. They feel awkward and are afraid of men police because of their harsh behavior. Duty of assisting the police in tracing missing women and children, keeping watch over the places of ill-fame, recovering minor girls from brothels and escorting them to rescue homes, courts, hospitals, jails. Recovery of women and girls involved in abduction and kidnapping cases is also important duty because women police can understand women and children and their problems more than policemen and their presence during these cases is also essential because these cases give mental relief to women offenders. Women police can also help in collection of intelligence and information easily where women are involved.

The presence of women police during interrogation of juveniles and women offenders under trials and women witnesses is also necessary because women or juvenile offenders or women witnesses can be closely observed by women police. Women police can assist police in the investigation of rape cases as they are of delicate nature. It is because victims or witnesses

of such cases feel awkward and hesitate to talk with policemen whereas women police can investigate them in more closer way and reach to the bottom of the problem. Presences of women police during arrest, search and escort of women and juvenile offenders have lessen the complaints from people about misbehaviour of policemen with women offenders.

Further, looking after women and children in big fairs and festivals and places of pilgrimage, dealing with women agitators and satyagrahis during political and labor demonstrations are also duties, which are suitable for women police because women police can control women and children more effectively. Duty of family investigation involving women is also entrusted to women police so that police can tackle the problem of getting information somewhat easily. Duty of assisting social organizations and probation officers in the rehabilitation of runaway women and young girls and prostitutes is entrusted to women police as they understand these problems more thoroughly and can take right decisions regarding matters such as rehabilitation and can direct policemen in this way. Lastly, women police are also given public relations work. Today police have very faint image in society. People look upon police as harsh, corrupt and politically polluted system. However, it is believed that women police with their

sincerity and hardwork can help in building a good image of police before public.

The experience has showed that the entry of women in police force has made the functioning of police public oriented, welfare oriented. Women police are indeed playing a significant role by performing various functions. Their role is essential in each and every case where woman are involved.

It is also voiced that some special legal procedures have to be adopted in case of women complainant or suspects. These procedures increase the responsibilities of women police. Following legal procedure is to be adopted in case of women complainant or suspects.

Legal Procedure To Be Adopted In Case Of Women

Complainant / Suspects ⁽¹⁵⁾:

1. In cases, where the complaints are registered by women and girls, the police should make enquires and investigations expeditiously and arrest the accused immediately. Similarly, legal and preventive action against them shall also be taken immediately.

2. When an occasion to arrest a women or to interrogate a woman witness arises, it is binding upon the police to keep a woman police personnel present.
3. While conducting inquiry and investigations, the statements of woman witnesses should be obtained by visiting them in their residence. During enquiry or investigation interrogation of women, girls should not be done in such a way that they feel embarrassed. Nor should any question be put to them by which they feel insulted nor any thing be asked raising doubts about their character or hurt their dignity.
4. If women and girls are to be arrested, they cannot be arrested after sunset and before sunrise. They cannot be taken to police station. However, under exceptional circumstances, if it is extremely necessary to take them to the police station, it is binding upon the police to allow their relatives to stay with them.
5. Accused women are to be kept in the cells specially reserved for them. If there is no separate room for them they are to be kept in the visitors room. But under no circumstances they should be kept in custody where male accused are kept.

6. Considering the traumatic mental condition of women who have become victims of rape, they should be treated with due respect and consideration. Similarly, while taking their Statements no uncivilized vulgar or obscene language should be used. The Statements of such women are to be obtained in the presence of women police personnel.
7. In case of suspected death of married woman, the Assistant Commissioner of Police / Sub-Divisional Police Officers will inspect the site and probe into the cause of death.

Thus, the nature of work of women police is very comprehensive. Since women police are not differentiated from men police at any stage from recruitment, training to retirement except some special circumstances like pregnancy leave, same duties are expected to be performed by them. However, their performance at work depends upon different factors such as their relations with male officers at work, attitude of women police and men police towards each other, facilities provided to them, their relations with criminals, relations with citizens or public, problems faced by women police etc. The researcher has made an effort to throw light on all such factors by having dialogue with women

police in Kolhapur city and their male counterparts and their officers as well.

Women Police Relations With Their Male Counterparts And Male Officers At Work:

As a part of whole police force, women police have to work with their male counterparts and male or female officers. These relations depend upon surroundings and atmosphere at work. When interviewed, women police talked about their multiple experiences at work. According to them, they get whole-hearted co-operation from their colleagues. There is no feeling of superiority or inferiority among them and they work alike. It is because they are not differentiated from men police at any stage of work while allotting various duties⁽¹⁶⁾. It is true that as women police they are given some special duties as we have seen above which call for some special training. However, when asked on this point they answered that while in training they are made aware of their duties and accordingly trained but no special training. In addition to this, they get on the job training at work from their officers.

When asked about relations with their colleagues, they answered that at work they behave like brothers and sisters.

Whenever they face any problem they talk with their male colleagues and try to have solution after discussion with them. When questioned regarding relations with officers women police stated that they get good support, guidance and training from their male as well as female officers. While allotting any duty, first they try to take women police in their confidence, then they are explained and trained for their duties⁽¹⁷⁾. The officers always encourage women police to perform their duties. The researcher has also observed such kind of environment while doing field work.

Relations With Criminals:

Women police come in contact with all types of criminals. However, mainly they are related to women accused. At day-to-day work when women approach police stations for petty clashes, women police have to play an important role. They have to handle such complainants very carefully. Women bring even small complaints like quarrel regarding tap water, conflicts with neighbours, quarrels between husband and wife or other family conflicts to police station⁽¹⁸⁾. In such situations women police have to handle them delicately.

Whenever a women convict is to be arrested, presence of woman police is essential. In police custody also women police looks after women criminals. While taking women criminals to court / hospitals they are accompanied by women police. In Kolhapur city police custody for keeping women criminals is not available at all the police stations. It is available only at Juna Rajwada Police Station. Women criminals arrested in any police station in the city are kept in Juna Rajwada Police Station and they are accompanied by woman police constable of respective police stations.

However, women police come in contact not only with women criminals but also men criminals. Mainly when there is a woman police officer like PI, PSI, ASI etc. she has to handle all types of criminals. There are three women ASI's in Kolhapur city. When interviewed they stated that more and more women should enter in to this field ⁽¹⁹⁾ and should try to reach top most positions. It is because women can handle some social-cultural problems more effectively then policemen. In other words, according to them while investigating any crime or interrogating any criminal it is very much essential to study his socio-cultural back-ground. Further, while interrogating women criminal's women police officers can do a satisfactory job as they can understand their

psychology better than men. If interrogating officers are women then women criminals also find it easy to answer them especially in cases like rape, molestation, dowry deaths etc as they can talk to women officers with less hesitation.

Further, when women police are on traffic duty, they have to be very alert. They should be provided with vehicles for catching the people who try to run away after violating traffic rules. When they were asked regarding their experiences in traffic duty they shared various experiences. On traffic duty they come in contact with all types of people. Some times they have to treat these people harshly. This is so only in extreme circumstances. According to them being woman makes no difference to their position because they present themselves as police before the public.

Facilities In Police Stations:

Minimum facilities in police stations are a must. However, in practice the conditions at police stations are at a deplorable level. There is no rest-cum-lunch room and dressing room for constables neither for men nor for women. At some police stations there is no separate toilet facilities for men or women. No drinking water facilities, no canteen and not even emergency light

facilities. In case electricity goes off at night it will create problems for police force to discharge their duties. For outstation duties in district Hqs. accommodation for rest at night is also not there. One lady constable boldly came out with her experience when she was on out station duty⁽²⁰⁾. Once she was on out station duty at Gadhinglaj and at night she was not provided with a separate arrangement or separate rest-room and she was told to adjust with the situation. She was also told that she should not leave police station because some senior officers are to visit at night. However, by her luck she had one relative in that village and also an officer who tried to understand her problems and permitted her to stay at her relatives house at night. However, such situations may lead them to unforeseen dangers and lead to degradation of their morale.

Thus, the above mentioned facilities must be provided in all the police stations. Police can perform their duties well and satisfy the expectations of people only if police are provided with basic facilities.

Corruption in Police Administration :

The problem in ^aserious way in police started during world war II and has been passed to free India by the British

Government. In order to check it, first important ^{Step} taken was that of setting up Delhi Special Police establishment. In 1964, Central Vigilance Commission was setup by the Government of India. Subsequently a Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions was setup to look in to the Grievances of the public. The problem was also looked into by Administrative Reforms Commission. Institution of Lok Pal is also a step up in checking corruption in high officers⁽²¹⁾.

Corruption has entered in each and every part of Administration and Police Administration is also not an exception to this. During fieldwork the researcher discussed this problem with women police as well as policemen and police officers. During discussion, many reasons came to fore front such as lower salary, overburden of work, risk in duties and greediness of man to some extent. If proper attention is not paid to this problem it will stunt the whole organisation. Hence the Government should take initiative by appointing Commissions to review salary of Police Personnel, duty hours, nature of work etc. and also implement their recommendations.

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