



Research Paper

Inclusion of Women within Police Force in India: Towards a Gender-Inclusive Policing

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ABSTRACT: Role of Police in our civilised society is vital & each day the essential status of police personnels are rising to maintain the balance between the ethical & unethical people. They are responsible for maintaining law and order, preventing crime, and protecting individuals and communities from harm. Women's empowerment is possible through the inclusion of women in police. However, police force has always been considered as a male-dominating profession. Gender discrimination is prevalent in the police force and can persist due to factors like cultural norms, societal norms, systemic exclusion, problems with the recruitment of women, socially constructed discourse and so on. This undermines the potential and abilities of women and thus challenges their participation in the police force. Attractive policies have failed to integrate more and more women into the police force. The present paper analyses the position of women in the policing culture of the country makes a critical review relating to women's role in the police, the existing policies protecting and promoting women's continuation in police professions, the current scenario and the challenging forces.

KEYWORDS: Police, Gender Discrimination, Gender Inclusive Policing, Women empowerment, Gender stereotype.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Modern society is changing very rapidly. In this changing cultural and social climate, contemporary policing is marked by the diversification and uncertainty of crime control problems. In a large and populous country like India, police organization must rapidly innovate and implement new methods and strategies to keep citizens safe. According to the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) police are one of the most ubiquitous organizations of society (2017). The policemen/ women, therefore, happen to be the most visible representatives of the government.

The primary role of police officers is to uphold and enforce laws, investigate crimes, and ensure security for people in the country. It is important to note that policing as a profession should be made equally open to both women and men and that both are treated fairly as police officers. This is known as "Gender Inclusive Policing". In India, even though the government has announced 33% reservation of women in police force, the representation of women in the Indian Police continues to be poor at 7.28% in 2017(Tata Trusts, 2017).

The police force has had a history of being a predominantly male-dominated job and was highly patriarchal with the uneven representation of men and women. Masculine ethos and practices dominate the police system. Gender ideology and gender stereotypes had long sidelined women from entering the police force. It was believed that female police personnel were a burden on the police system because they were stereotypically thought to be weaker than men. They lack the skills and the abilities to fight crime. This kept the women away from opting for a career in the police profession.

However, with a changing socio-cultural environment, technological skill acquisition and an increase in educational opportunities, women have started recognizing their inherent potential strength.

Women who work in law enforcement have struggled for years to gain acceptance in their workplace. The under-representation of women in the police force is a worldwide phenomenon. Even though the number of female officers has increased, male officers continue to greatly out-number them. The police force still presents a strong masculine image and thus law enforcement is an occupation that is believed to be most suitable for

men. This puts the women at the risk of becoming increasingly marginalized in the police culture. The equal participation of women is challenged thereby.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research study is descriptive in nature. The entire methodology used in the present paper is based on the overview of the literature relating to the position of women in the policing culture of the country, makes a critical review relating to women's role in the police, the existing policies protecting and promoting women's continuation in police professions, the current scenario and the challenging forces. The study resorted to only secondary methods where the data was collected from research papers, publications, websites, survey reports etc.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although numerous research studies have been conducted relating to the other areas of gender studies and research, research on women in police are scanty in India. Critical studies on the challenges faced by women in this profession are limited and have not yet got adequate attention. A few studies that could be traced in this regard are quoted here.

The Tata Trusts (2019) in its report titled "Status of Policing in India", presents that the representation of women in the Indian police force continues to be poor at 7.28% as of Jan 1, 2017. The force lacks gender sensitivity and fails to address the needs of women. The lack of women's representation in the police force further contributes to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and intensifies biases against women within the police force as well as women who have an interface with the police. None of the states has been able to meet the 33% benchmark set by the Ministry of Home Affairs, with the Tamil Nadu having the highest representation of women at 12.9% in 2016. The police administration fails to provide separate toilets for women and institutional childcare facilities like crèches.

Studies by Randhwa and Narang (2013) and Sahgal (2007) revealed that women are not positioned on mainstream police tasks. Often, they are placed as either a telephone operator or a typist in the department or given the job of escorting women prisoners or investigating minor offences against women and children. To the researchers, women are still under-represented in the police force and are not assigned to field mission to the same extent as men. According to the 7th National Conference of Women in Police (NCWP) organized under the aegis of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) revealed that women face a glass ceiling regarding promotion due to the separate cadre system for men and women at the subordinate ranks. Only a select number of posts at the head-constable, sub-inspector and inspector ranks are assigned to women police. The number of women in senior positions in the police in India paints a sorry picture. Mahajan (1982) highlights the point that lack of acceptance and recognition for policewomen exists and they play only a pseudo role in the department. They remain ambiguous due to organizational apathy, opposition from the male incumbent's societal negative reactions, and lack of opportunity for women to occupy positions of authority in police organizations. Natarajan (2008) who studied policewomen in the context of Tamil Nadu argues that in a traditional "closed" society like India, an alternative route has to be found to bring women to an equal status with that of men in the male-dominated occupation of policing. Natarajan suggests that the Tamil Nadu model of establishing 'All Women Police Units' (AWPU) is an effective way of breaking gender hierarchy and letting policewomen out of the trap of performing "support functions".

Though women have gained entry into the masculine police force their struggle for equity continues. Women are being hired in inconsequential positions, they are given un-interested assignments, suffer from inadequate job training and face resistance from male colleagues

(Brown, 2000). While women have made incredible progress in the police force by way of increasing their share in terms of absolute number, yet they remain in less powerful occupational positions that are often low paying, boring and with very little advancement for promotions (Jacobs, 1987).

IV. ROLE OF WOMEN OFFICERS

Since Independence, India has witnessed enormous socio-cultural and economic transformations during the past few decades. This has created opportunities for both men and women to seek a better life. While these opportunities helped women in many ways, they also led twosome problems, for example, more women became vulnerable to victimization both at home and outside. While their risks of victimization have increased, women have become assertive and started reporting innumerable cases in the police. This led to the need to introduce preventive measures, including enacting and amending laws that relate to violence against women. These laws created a need for more female police officers to assist and protect the under privileged and weaker segments of the country. The need to have women police increased with the rising number of women accused, criminals and victims of crime (Mahajan, 1982).

Many state police also created women's cells and all-women police stations, in response to recommendations made by the National Police Commission (1977). Despite all these indicators of progress, there are still no clear-cut policies relating to the appropriate roles of women in the Indian police force and there is the danger they will continue to be used mainly in what Shane (1980) calls social support roles or, in Singh's words (1989, p. 395), only to "control social evils" such as related to dowry, domestic violence etc...

Women officers were mostly used as social workers rather than law enforcement officers, mainly dealing with matters concerning women and children. They are routinely relegated to desk duty, escorting women prisoners or tasks that shield them from frontline policing. According to Aleem (1989), in almost all states women police have played only a peripheral role, largely limited to protective and preventive tasks, including those concerning women and juveniles.

According to the BPRD (1975), some of the principal duties performed by women police in India are:

- Helping in the investigation of crimes involving women and children.
- Providing assistance to the local police in tracing missing women and children.
- Recovering minor girls from brothels and escorting them to rescue homes, courts, and hospitals.
- Recovery of women and girls involved in abduction and kidnapping cases.
- Search and escort of women offenders.
- VIP and security duties.
- Work relating to women passengers at airports such as in-person security check and their belongings.
- Helping local police in evacuating women and children from disturbed areas and in emergencies like a natural disaster, calamity, etc...
- Maintaining order in women meetings and processions.
- Dealing with women agitators, satyagrahis and labour troubles in which women are involved.
- Looking after women and children in fairs and places of worship and in festivals.

Recommendation of the National Police Commission (NPC) says: "The presence of women police station would help in getting trust and confidence in the police. Women police can also help in giving better attention to the "Service" aspects of police work. The entire philosophy, culture and attitude of police should be such as to make a police station appear and function as a ready source of relief for persons in distress. In our view, the presence of women police in police station would help to a great extent in achieving this objective.

Women officers possess better communication skills than their male counterparts and can elicit the public's cooperation and trust. There have been a few women in the police service who have gone beyond their usual jobs of policing. One notable among them is Ms. Kiran Bedi, the first woman IPS officer making her way into essentially a male bastion. She has brought about radical changes in the lives of the inmates of the Tihar jail in New Delhi. With such contributions, she has evolved as the icon of an independent woman of India.

Another important role of a women police officer is that they act as an instrument of social-political change. They respond more effectively to violence against women. In some respects, women are better suited to police work than men. For instance, in sexual assault cases, the victim might want to talk to a woman. But that may not always happen because there are not enough female police officers in the department, and it ends up affecting the mission. In a study conducted by National Centre for Women in Policing titled "A Self-Assessment Guide for Law Enforcement" (2001), women officers use less physical force and shine better in defusing and de-escalating violent confrontations with the public, and they are less involved in problems regarding the use of excessive force. Therefore, a women police officer in the field can bring about changes in policies and procedures that could benefit both male and female officers.

Thus, despite the various limitations, women police can play a very effective role in improving the image of and public confidence in the police as a whole. The change may not be very visible at the beginning, but it will have lasting effects.

V. MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN OFFICERS WITHIN THE POLICE PROFESSION IN INDIA

Modern society has progressed from the conflicts between the traditional and modern, the rational and irrational. Old norms and taboos are being broken and new patterns are emerging. Due to these new transitions and transformations of a new society, women all over the world have had to struggle hard, to make a breakthrough into the police service. Male resistance and societal prejudices were the main hurdles in their way which took years to overcome.

V.1. Gender Discrimination

Women who have chosen a career in law enforcement have felt the impact of the male-dominated profession. Despite laws forbidding discrimination, women working in the police system continue to face discrimination and remain a marginalized, unaccepted minority. Gender integration has been strongly resisted

due to the belief that women are incapable of performing police work. The barrier of tradition, and the traditional 'macho-image' associated with the occupation of policing, is a significant barrier to women. According to studies carried out, women in police are perceived to be less competent and able than their male counterparts. They are generally not allowed to take part in core policing activities and have to work doubly hard to expel such notions. Several researchers have concluded that "women have gradually acculturated into the police sub-culture while still experiencing varying degrees of sexual discrimination and harassment" (Heidensohn, 1992; Gosset and Williams, 1998). Jharkhand's state police manual had stated that women police officers shall not be substituted for male police and should be appointed tasks that they alone can perform better. Women generally entrusted with tasks like escorting female prisoners, helping male police in the investigations which concerns female victims or watches the duty of female suspects.

However, the reality is that most women in the police (except those who want to escape from hardships) want to be treated at par with their male counterparts so that they get a fair and equal opportunity to prove their worth. Women police personnel demand the same selection criteria, training standards, incentives and work schedules as those applicable to their male counterparts.

V.2. Sexual Harassment

Women police personnel have also confronted sexual harassment at the workplace. It affects the dignity and performance of women personnel in this profession. Sexual harassment introduces stress, psychological illnesses, including depression and job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, job attrition and deterioration in productivity (Gohlipour, 2011). The degree of sexual harassment at the workplace has reached alarming proportions (Steph, 2006). Even in the police department, women employees are not safe. One of the reasons why sexual harassment goes unreported in police work is due to peculiarities of policing in itself like subordination, solidarity etc...(Davis, 2005). For example, on 14 January 2011, at least eleven women were allegedly sexually exploited by the trainers in the training school, which was revealed during a routine medical test. Generally, female officers do not report sexual harassment, as they are either suspended or, their account is discredited. Moreover, they believe that their male-counterparts would see them as weak and vulnerable.

V.3. Prejudices and Biases of Male Police Personnel

Women in the police have not been fully accepted by their male counterparts. Along with negative attitudes from co-workers, a myriad of other barriers faced daily by women in the police force impedes successful integration. Male officers resistance to female officers is copiously documented in the literature. Although policewomen are expected to perform tasks and roles similar to those of policemen, there are differences in terms of the women's motivation levels as well as the negative attitudes of their male counterparts and decision-makers (Sahgal, 2007). Male police personnel usually fail to appreciate their counterparts because they have a number of misconceptions about the capabilities of women in the police. It is believed that women lack the physical strength, stamina, height and weight to deal with thugs and brawls (Niland, 1996). Even where women are well qualified and experienced, the pre-dominance of males has resulted in a culture where male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm, and women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues (Steph, 2006). Male police personnel believe that women in the police should be given only specific tasks relating to women and children; they should be given the task of cooking in the police mess; they should escort only female prisoners, and they should not be engaged in operations against militants. In short, the male workforce still believes that there is no need to integrate women employees into mainstream policing. It is also feared that women in commanding positions will undermine the solidarity among men.

V.4. Role Ambiguity and Role Conflicts

With the increase in the number of women in the police, issues like role conflicts or multiple roles and role ambiguity have got aggravated. Most women in the police are confused about the way they should conduct themselves. If they behave lady-like, their acceptance amongst male colleagues is low. On the other hand, their active participation in casual repartees carries the danger of losing their colleagues' respect (Suman, 2010). There is evidence of both inter-role and intra-role conflicts occurring among women who join the police force. Policewomen underachieve as patrol officers, often falling into cycles of de-motivation and failure. They accept stereotypical roles, display low work commitment and seek non-patrol assignments (Christie, 1996).

V.5. Non -Acceptance and Poor Comfort Level

The most important barrier that women confront is male hostility and non-acceptance towards women police personnel. The bias and prejudice of male officers towards subordinate women police personnel take on various forms such as deploying women in less desirable positions and assignments with fewer opportunities to demonstrate potentialities and capabilities. Women police personnel often do not get the chance to attend new innovative training courses.

Many men in the police service are not comfortable with women colleagues or subordinates; show a tendency to not recruit women as colleagues or subordinates; and do not take women's opinions and ideas seriously (Sahgal, 2007). Most women police personnel feel that their presence amongst their male counterparts tends to make the environment 'formal and stiff'. The mutual comfort level between men and women colleagues in the police is very low (Suman, 2010).

V.6. Lack of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a critical component to an organization's effective and efficient working. The most common factors for women joining the police profession are job security, responsibility, respect and recognition, promotion opportunities and pay. However, most women in the police are not satisfied with their promotion opportunities and working conditions (Sahgal, 2007). Women face a glass ceiling in regards to promotion. Thus, it makes the women police personnel less satisfied with their jobs and are demotivated to perform the necessary tasks, have lower productivity, more absences and higher turnover intentions.

V.7. Work-Family Imbalance

The dual responsibility of work and family affect both men & women, but it is the women who most often carry the major responsibilities within the home (Bush and Middlewood, 1997; Steph, 2006). As women playing the "dual roles" of managing home and career, faces greater challenges in striving for balance between their duties at home and the responsibilities at work (Washington, 2011). They get less support from their family and hence mostly avoid night duty. Thus, they are often accused of taking advantage of their gender as also physical frailty to escape hard duty, to get less duty and avoid night duty. Citing reasons of bearing, rearing of children and nursing of family members they often avoid hard assignments. All these factors ultimately portray a negative image. These factors prohibit women police from getting fully integrated into the police force.

VI. INITIATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT

Achieving substantive equality between men and women within the police system requires a multipronged approach. Systematic planning is required towards an incremental increase in the overall representation of women at all levels, within a specified time and towards the goal of achieving proportionate representation of men and women. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws and developmental policies, plans and programmes are aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. Further, being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and several other conventions and treaties, India is obligated to ensure the 'principle of equity' in its full spirit. Thus, the Government has started gearing efforts and formulated policies and programmes for mainstreaming women in police and has taken actionable measures to bridge the imbalance between men and women within the police forces as a part of its gender development programme. It tried to leverage and utilizes the capabilities and talent base of women by inducting them into the police force for accelerating the pace of the country's development.

The 5th National Police Commission (1980) devoted a large section to women police. It not only called for an increase in the representation of women in the force, which at that time stood at 0.4% but also recommended an equal share in police work and more involvement in the police administration. Its specific recommendations include:

1. Women police should be given a greater role in investigations work, performing a special role dealing with crimes against women and children and tackling juveniles in conflict with the law.
2. Women police need to be recruited in much larger numbers than at present, preferably in the ranks of Assistant Sub-Inspectors or Sub-Inspectors of Police rather than in the rank of constables.
3. Women police should become an integral part of the police organization and should not constitute a separate branch with recruitment and promotion confined to that branch alone.

Generally, women should be given the same training as male officers with emphasis on special training in dealing with women and children but also in public order situations.

In 2013, the Ministry reiterated the 33% target and recommended each police station to have at least three women sub-inspectors and ten women police constables to ensure women help desks are always staffed. More recently, the Ministry has proposed creating Investigative Units for Crimes against Women (IUCAW) at police stations in crime-prone districts across states and is to have around 15 specialized investigators dealing specifically with crimes against women. Of the 15 staff, at least one-third are required to be women personnel.

The *Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD)*, a wing of the Ministry of Home Affairs, organises a national conference for women in police biannually in collaboration with a state police force,

bringing together women police across ranks and states. The conferences have repeatedly stressed the need for increased representation of women and recommended several measures including 33% reservation, special recruitment drives, a common cadre for men and women, and better facilities for women.

This initiative has been taken up to strengthen gender sensitivity in the police force to improve the overall police responsiveness to gender-sensitive cases. So far 7 states and all Union Territories have joined this initiative and have started recruiting additional women police officers. Most of the other States have agreed to start working on this. But to everyone's surprise, no state meets those guidelines. The southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, whose police force is about 12% women, comes the closest.

In 2012-2013, and again in 2014-2015, the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women took up the issue of women police to "**review the working conditions of women police in India**". This was the first effort by a Parliamentary Committee to examine the issue of women in policing. The Committee's findings and recommendations not only provide a strong impetus for improving the gender ratio within police organisations but also, importantly, point out the changes in organisational structure and policies which must go hand in hand for women to play a meaningful role in policing.

A National Police Mission was set up by the Government of India in 2005 to guide, monitor and review the transformation of policing into an:

"Efficient, Effective, and Responsive agency both as an instrument of state and as a service to citizens".

The Seventh Micro-Mission looks at gender crimes and gender-related issues with special emphasis on rape and police response, including issues and concerns related to women in policing. For instance, it has discussed drafting a model gender policy for police departments as well as performance audits of all-women police stations (National Police Mission 2005).

Another promising programme relates to the operationalization of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) which has been developed by the Women and Child Development (WC&D) Ministry and sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs for adoption. MPVs will act as a link between police and community and facilitate women in distress. The MPVs shall report the incidence of violence against women, domestic violence and dowry harassment (Ministry of Women and Child Development 2019).

Looking at the policy landscape over the years, a major pre-occupation is the need to address violence against women and promote women's safety, with women police as a prime vector. One of the earliest measures was the constitution of All-Women Police Stations (AWPS) to focus exclusively on crimes against women. These are precisely what their name states – exclusive police stations, separate from the regular police station of an area but under the jurisdiction of the **district Superintendent of Police**, staffed mainly by women police to

1. Receive,
2. Register, and
3. Where possible, investigate crimes against women.

The intent is to facilitate women to report crimes to the police in a space perceived safer than a male-dominated police station. There is no central advisory or direction to set up AWPS, it is purely at states' discretion. According to a study **Rough Roads to Equality: Women Police in South Asia** conducted by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2015) all states have not established them AWPS, though some do have sizeable numbers. Tamil Nadu leads with 198 all-women police stations at present.

Representation of women was addressed for the first time in the 2006 Model Police Act which called for: **"adequate gender representation in the composition of the police service"** and required, **"each police station to have a Women and Child Protection Desk staffed, as far as possible, by women police personnel, to record complaints of crimes against women and children and to deal with the tasks relating to the administration of special legislations relating to women and children"**.

Although this is a step forward, the 2006 Model Act does not explicitly mention gender equality as a core principle governing the police service nor does it define "adequate representation".

A Second Committee constituted in 2013, looks at the issue of diversity and gender equality in police forces. New laws relating to sexual crimes against children and women were passed in 2012 and 2013 respectively, giving exclusive functions to women police in the registration of complaints and recording of victim statements.

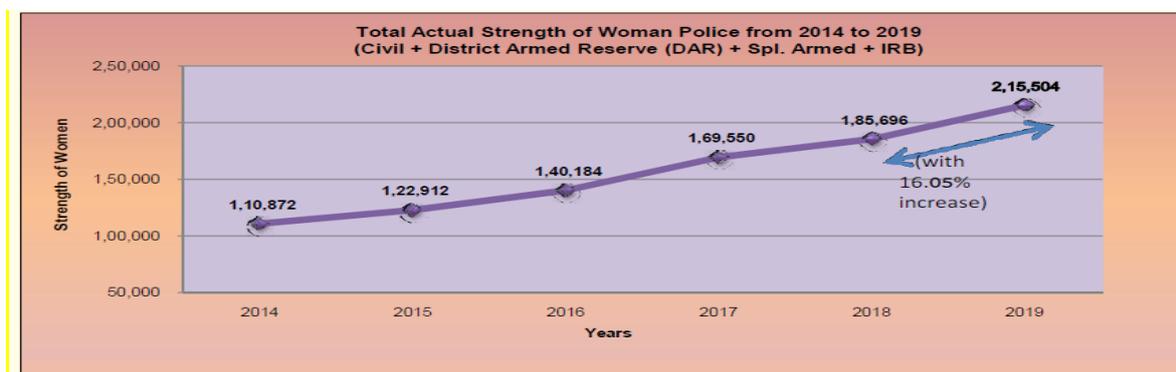
In the draft of the policy for women 2016, it was a part of it, to see and ensure that, there is gender-specific training incorporating gender sensitivity and thorough briefing on all the specific laws on women will be undertaken continuously for all levels, cadres and ranks of women police personnel.

VII. RISING TREND OF WOMEN IN POLICE

Several measures and policies were taken by the government to assign equal status to women in the police force. Irrespective of so many noble efforts, female police officers still face "barriers" that hinder their career advancement opportunities. Due to the prevailing patriarchal culture, these kinds of unconventional professions are full of challenges for working women. Structural and cultural barriers prevent women to be

accurately represented and excel in this profession. Many times, it has become a forbidden zone for women. This makes the gender mainstreaming agenda non-operative in the police force.

A statistic gathered and published by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) found that the total strength of Women in police from 2014 to 2019 has shown an increasing trend, which is self-explanatory from the following graph.



Source: Bureau of Police Research and Development Data on Police organization, 2020

At present, the actual strength of total woman police (Civil+ DAR+ Special Armed+ IRB) is 2,15,504 as of 01.01.2020 in the country, showing an increase of 16.05%, over the strength of 1,85,696 in 2018.

A breakdown of the numbers reveals women are concentrated at lower ranks, with very few at important operational positions such as officer in charge of districts or police stations. While largely the police departments' promotions systems are mired in internal problems, the prevalence of the separate cadre system for men and women at the subordinate ranks stunts their career growth.

Rank-wise percentage of women police in India as of January 2020

RANKS	NUMBER	IN PERCENT
Constable	1,36,937	78%
Head Constable	17,329	10%
Asst.Sub Inspector	4700	2.7%
Sub Inspector	10,272	5.9%
Inspector	3102	1.78%
ASP/Dy.SP/ Asst. COM	691	0.39%
Addl. SP/ Dy. COM	198	0.11%
AIGP/SSP/SP/ COM	310	0.17%
DIG	45	0.02%
IGP	38	0.02%
Add DG	27	0.01%
DGP/Spl DG/ADGP	5	0.002%
Total	1,73,654	100%

Source: Bureau of Police Research and Development Data on Police organization, 2020

The following Pie-chart indicates the rank-wise percentage of women police in India.

CHART: 1

Rank-wise percentage of Women Police in India in 2020

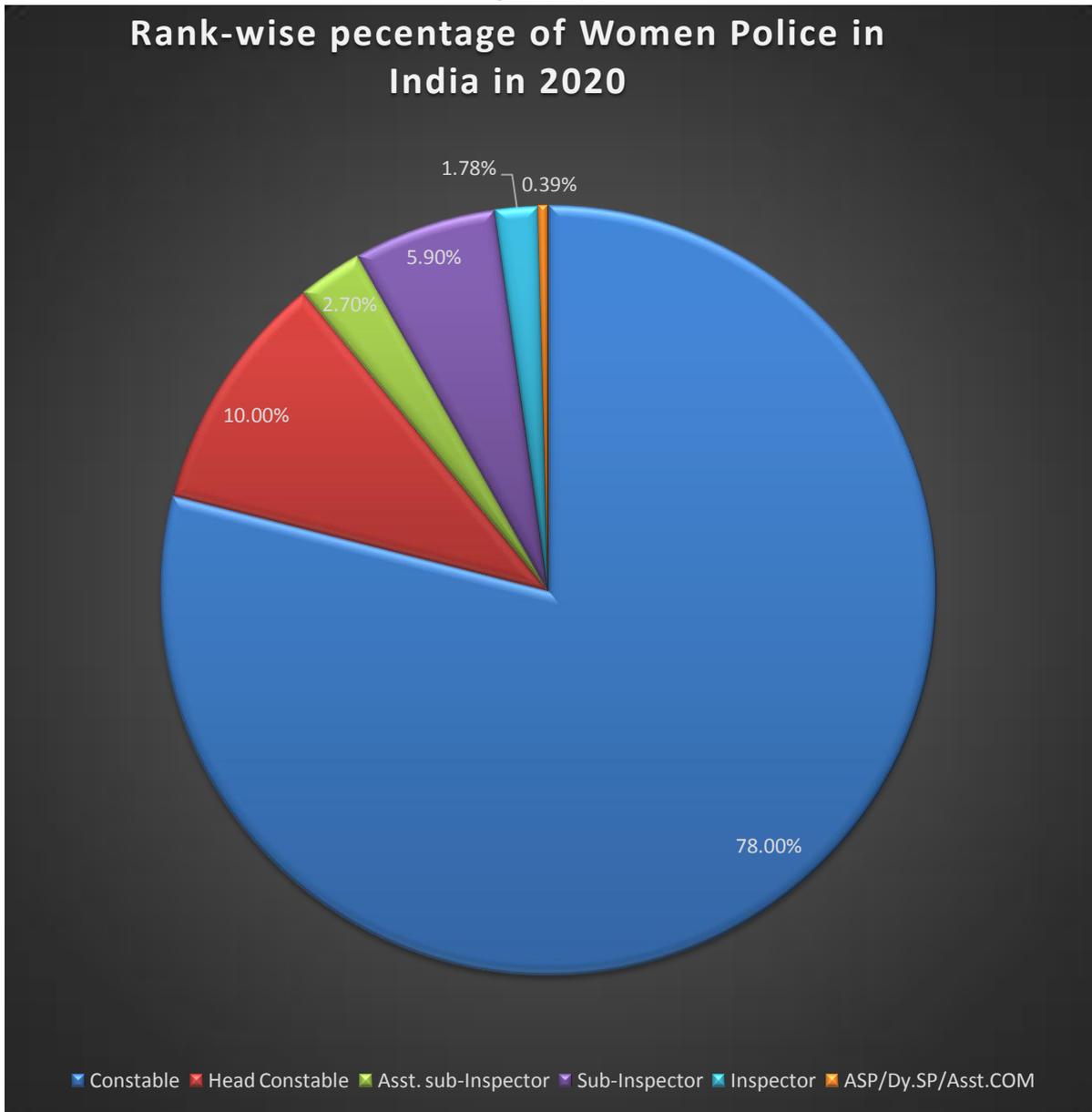
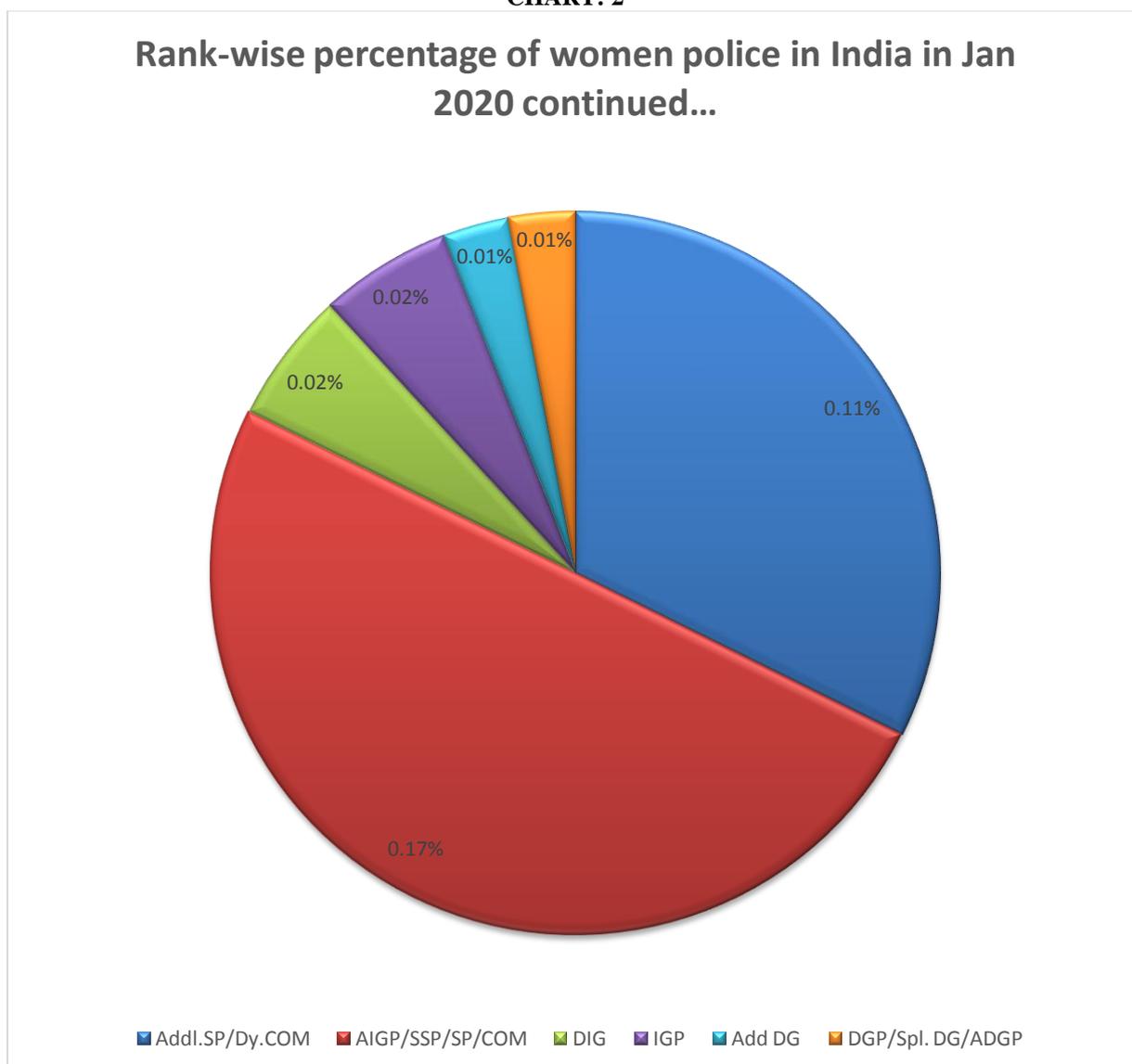


CHART: 2



Thus, from the above table and figures it is revealed that only a selected number of posts at the Head Constable, Sub-Inspector and Inspector ranks are assigned to women police; there are fewer opportunities for promotion. A male constable can typically rise to the rank of Sub-Inspector; very few women constables get promoted to that level. As a result, women are concentrated only in the constable and head constable positions.

Increasing the numbers and role of women in police has slowly, albeit firmly, gained policy recognition in India. Availability of adequate number of women in police is essential for reducing the vulnerability of women against crimes. The existing Woman Police population Ratio is still very low. Poor representation of women in the police is posing serious challenges in dealing with crimes against women and woman criminals. Therefore, it is essential that woman Police personnel are visible at the cutting edge level.

VIII. DISCUSSION

We are living in the 21st century where times have changed dramatically. Women have overcome many hurdles and barriers to come at par with their male counterparts. She has come to her own and started scaling the ladders of social advance with pride and dignity. The Police force is not only dominated by men but also by male values. It has been observed that women are entering into the police force and trying to break the masculine domain of the police system. Modern society has evolved into a dynamic and complex society and so the roles and responsibilities of women officers in the police force have also expanded. The role of women officers has been steadily increasing. They are no more confined to the soft jobs in the police system and have become more suitable for tough assignments. Women are an asset to the police force. They are known to employ a different style of conflict resolution i.e. communication before a physical confrontation. The duties of

women officers in India as framed by BPRD(1975) needs to be modified and reformed because these models belong to the era where women have just gained an entry into the “traditional masculine domain”. Today, women officers are taking a central, rather than a marginal role in the police. Saha(1989) suggested that in order to change the image, the serving women personnel have to display a matchless sense of duty, dedication and a spirit of selfless service. Only their performance can silence critics, challenge prejudices and help them earn recognition and occupy a prestigious place in the police force, dominated by the male bastion.

By and large, women were used as social workers, rather than as law enforcement officers, dealing mainly with matters concerning women and children. But now, women are seeking to prove that they can do the job of policing equally as well as the men.

IX. CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussions clearly projects gender gaps affecting the Indian Police Service. Women police personnel are still not valued as an important human resource in the police profession. Gender discrimination and marginalization is widely prevalent within the police department. Since women in police are under-represented within the organization, their work receives little recognition and appreciation even when their performance is commendable. Gender stereotyping involves a pervasive belief about the suitability of jobs for one gender or the other, such as the belief that women police personnel are too vulnerable to be in combat roles. These societal values, beliefs and attitudes permeate the organizational structure and get reflected within the police system.

Despite the government provisions and policy framework, the situation of women in the police system seems grim and in despair. The police culture is steeped in stereotypical prejudices against women and their abilities to perform the policing role. The most important barrier that women confront is male hostility towards women police personnel. They have not been fully accepted by their male counterparts within the organization. Along with negative attitudes from co-workers, a myriad of other barriers faced daily by women in the police force impedes their successful integration. Male officers resistance to female officers is copiously documented in the literature.

Although policewomen are expected to perform tasks and roles similar to those of policemen, there are differences in terms of the women’s motivation levels as well as the negative attitudes of their male counterparts and decision-makers (Sahgal, 2007). Male police personnel usually fail to appreciate their counterparts because they have a number of misconceptions about the capabilities of women in the police. It is believed that women lack the physical strength, stamina, height and weight to deal with thugs and brawls (Niland, 1996). Even where women are well qualified and experienced, the pre-dominance of males has resulted in a culture where male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm, and women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues (Steph, 2006).

However, the reality is that most women in the police force want to be treated equally with their male counterparts so that they get a fair and equal opportunity to prove their worth. The public-private dichotomy persists in the society. Women’s traditional reproductive roles mismatch with the productive demands of a police organization. For some traditionalists, policing being a masculinised strength-based occupation is too difficult to handle for women. As women playing the dual roles of managing both home and career, they face greater challenges in striving for balance between their duties at home and the responsibilities at work. Overtime hours are again a taboo for women in the Indian culture. But police system demands overtime duty and thus it put women at a disadvantage position. Their performances are scrutinized at every level through gender-stereotypical lenses by the police organization as well as by society itself. Thus, women become the excluded groups in the police organization and their participation in this sector is highly challenged.

Hence, it can be concluded that a time has come to challenge the entrenched gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices, and facilitate social reform. While acknowledging that gender inequality at the workplace is multifaceted, the government should formulate and strictly implement policies that guarantee equality between the male and female workforce in the police departments. Various training programmes, seminars, courses and workshops should be organized by the authorities concerned to change the attitude of the male police personnel and society at large. But the most changes can bring by the women themselves through their persistence. It is important for women to recognize their endurance, strength and capabilities to handle tough situations in an effective way. Feminist engagement can bring a real change in the police structure and can help for confidence-building among women that can make them better performers in the police system. These are imperative for achieving gender diversity, gender inclusive policing and gender justice in the police culture.

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