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**A WOMAN IN A MAN'S WORLD: EMPOWERING WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.**


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**Abstract:** Violence against women has set another level to the word barbarism whether on a domestic or on a social front. Customs, traditions and accepted practices which should play defense to evils in a civilization are instead an instigation to this heinous trend. This may seem to be a tiny speck at the behest but the fact is it is a burning concern which should be dealt with effectively. Not everyone has the sensitivity to understand the gravity of this predicament. If a woman is an integral part of the system she could serve as an asset to the governance and its vital bodies strengthening the hold of law over the perpetrators implicated in cases pertaining to violence against women as also a boon in disguise for victims who often tend to suffer secondary victimization at when they intend to take the shelter of law seeking justice. Women have proved themselves in varied avenues and work settings; law enforcement being the crunch of efficient governance quint essentially requires and expects their highly weighed contribution.

**Keywords:** Women, Law Enforcement, Violence, Policing.

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**Introduction:** In a traditionally encroached society like the one we have in India, a career oriented woman is always seen as a defier to the norms by most and a definer of society by some others. A woman walking down the aisle, conforming to the conservative and traditional view is more acceptable than another marching forthright taking charge of her internal and external borders. In such a scenario when a woman stands up to this social non-acceptance and lives up to her own expectations wanting to serve her people, her country there are certainly lots of barrier she may have to meet with, refraining her from discharging her duties zestfully. At one end there is a rise in the accounts of atrocities being committed against women and children, not merely by commoners but also by their defenders, their social and legal protectors while at the other end though women are granted the tedious task of lending a helping hand to the weak, they are hardly given the resources and support to do so. "When she is appointed to the law enforcement she is given the position but denied the power". In a lot many cases women have proved themselves to be excellent administrators and intricate investigators but having to prove themselves each time and being answerable on their each move may deter them from coming forward to take up policing or defense positions, as also playing a dual role of a home-maker and law-enforcer becomes a challenge for her. The present work focuses particularly on a statistical review on the current figures of women in policing. It progresses analytically towards understand the discrepancies which evidently portrays itself in these numbers bringing out the gender inequality in the system of law enforcement. The study also tries to identify the reasons behind this low number of women in policing and initiates to put forth how increasing women in police can actually serve as an aid to the social safety.

**Objectives**

- To statistically evaluate the trend in the appointment of women in Police system.
- To identify the reasons for discrepancies in the

gender ratio of personnel in police force.

- To ascertain the basis for increasing women personnel in police as an aid to societal security.

**Methodology of the Study:**

*Universe of the Study:* The present work attempts to understand the statistical trend in gender ratio of police personnel and the reasons behind this uneven distribution of males and females in the system, suggesting solutions as to why a higher number of women in police is a bane in disguise for the system.

*Sources and Techniques of the Data Collection:* The current work is primarily based on information and statistical information procured from reliable sources such as national crime reports and other content derivatives like journals, books, newspaper articles/editorials, internet polls/surveys etc. the contents from all these sources were precisely reviewed and compared to deduce to the desired answers from the available channels.

**Women in Policing:** A woman working with the police is a phenomenon that is gradually coming into acceptance since the last few decades due to the presence of gender specific roles that very evidently features in the reactions of society upon knowing that a woman is contributing her skills towards a nontraditional profession.

**Statistical Overview:**

	YEAR 2012	
	Actual	Sanctioned
Total Police Personnel	16,74,755	21,64,316
Men	15,89,293	21,06,998
Women	85,462	57,318
Percentage of women to the total strength	5.10	2.64
Ratio of women to men	1:18.5	1:36.7

The actual strength of women civil police including district armed police at the national level was 85,462 against the sanctioned strength of 57,318.

- The percentages of actual strength of women police to the actual total strength of police personnel (Men + Women) was 5.10%, as compared to the sanctioned strength which was 2.64%.
- The proportion of actual women police to actual men police was observed to be 1:18.5, while the proportion of the same for the sanctioned strength was 1:36.7.
- The maximum strength of women civil police among the States existed in Maharashtra (17,134), Followed by Tamil Nadu (12,085), Uttar Pradesh (6,488), Rajasthan (4,941) and Delhi (4,674). Nine States and five UTs had strength of less than one thousand.
- Delhi had the largest contingent of women civil police among UTs with strength of 4,674. 16 States and 5 UTs had more number of women civil police than their sanctioned strength.
- Women armed police is in existence in only 21 States / UTs namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, A&N Island, Daman & Diu, and Puducherry. The ratio of women armed police to the women civil police was 1:7.7.
- There are 510 women police stations all over India amounting to 3.6% of all police stations (14,155). Tamil Nadu had the maximum number of stations, followed by Uttar Pradesh. Maharashtra is one among the seven states which has no all women police stations.

**Observations:** If we observe the above trend it is evident that women are on extremely low numbers in the police forces.

1. Ironically the sanctioned strength is much lower than the actual strength as per the NCRB Report, which is surprising as the government has set such low proportion for intake of women into the force while if we observe the crime trend against women it is on a higher end as per statistics.
2. For every 19 police men there is 1 police woman recruited as per the NCRB records. In spite of directives to increase the women strength in police forces to 30%, hardly any state has surpassed this directive.
3. There are no all women police station in states like Maharashtra, which has recorded the highest number of cases of incest, molestation and other crimes outraging the modesty of women as well as dowry harassment cases. West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh are also higher on sexual offences against women (NCRB Report)
4. Most of these facts evidently came to light post the 16<sup>th</sup> December gang rape following which the Justice Verma Committee painted a clear picture to the

scenario of women policing in India.

**Importance of Women in Policing:** With the increasing rate of offences against women, children and elderly with the each passing year crossing new feats, women police officers play a critical role in addressing sexual, gender based violence and other offences against juveniles and geriatric population which disproportionately affects the civil survival in a society. Victims are reluctant to trust men in uniforms, so the role of women police officers is essential in:

- Reaching-out to the community,
- Understanding the victims' experience, and
- Learning about security challenges faced by women.

The victims naturally feel at ease opening up with other women and with more women police stations it would be easier for women to walk to the precinct without the fear of harassment and file a complaint. As early as the first half of the twentieth century women's rights advocates across the world urging cities to hire more policewomen because they saw male officers as unsympathetic to the plight of children and young women. As per previous studies, women prove to be an exceptionally brilliant in handling violent situation tactfully, using the gift of their gab as an aid in communicating things out and harmoniously extracting information from accused as well as balancing emotional situations and traumas while dealing with vulnerable victims

**Barriers faced by Women in Policing:** The social non-acceptance in case of women joining the police force place a pivotal role in shaping their future in system as well as has implications on their performance and reinforcement to join and sustain in the force. Below are the causes stated that enforces or discourages the joining and sustenance of women in police as per recent Boni & Circelli, press report which focuses on the following as the major issues:

1. Career Perceptions: Job intentions, Self-efficacy,
2. Workplace Justice and Equity: Procedural justice, Distributive justice, Gender and transfer/deployment, Sexism
3. Organizational Impediments: Career barriers, Stressors, Compromises and sacrifices, Bullying.
4. Workgroup Inter-Relations: Support groups and mentors, Co-worker support, Co-worker reaction to promotion.

Beyond the numbers, for the women who are already in, there is a range of issues that need to be addressed to mainstream and empower them for the full gamut of policing functions. A lot remains to be done also in terms of working conditions and facilities that are oriented to their needs.

**Findings:** The purpose of this work was to highlight the statistical information and ascribe a clearer idea about the unevenness with regards to gender in the system of policing in India, which is evident with certainty in the statistical information furnished by the researcher procured from NCRB (A national body that is

considered to be the most complete in maintaining the crime statistics) reports. The NCRB reports also highlight the rates of crime against women and its increasing trend in detail (the work merely makes a passing reference of the same due to constraints). The idea of the researcher in doing so was to highlight the fact that women are a strong asset to this system and need to be incorporated in large number into it. It is also a known fact that national statistics only refers to reported crimes while many offences are hardly reported. The initiation of women policing may provide a different face to the numbers of reported cases and encourage victims to come ahead and complain.

Women enrolment is also dependent on societal acceptance of the phenomena widely and the

willingness to provide them a chance without prejudices and biases to prove their potentiality. Accommodation at the job without discrimination, improvisation of the working conditions for women who are already there in the force is very important as an encouragement.

**Conclusion:** The above fact also puts on surface that Women in Police is an essentiality and no longer optional. Their contribution made to the profession can only help reduce the social inequity that surfaces in the stands taken by the governance.

It is an evident fact that metropolitan cities especially are the once suffering most due to this uneven distribution by a system focusing on gender specific personnel recruitment process. Social acceptance is the key to curb this disappointing trend.

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