



A Study on Challenges faced by Women Police Staff in Greater Mumbai Region

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Abstract: Policing is a fundamental part and function of governments globally and are committed to maintain peace and security by making themselves available all the time. This is an occupation where overtime and steady commitment is required. Police are thought to be a male-dominated profession. It represents patriarchy. With the inclusion of women in all aspects of social life, they also entered the police force. Women police officers are now an integral part of police reform efforts in almost every country around the world, including India. The main objective of the study was to understand the nature of work carried out by the women police staff in the Greater Mumbai region and find out the facilities provided and challenges faced by them. Descriptive Research Design was used for this study. The results revealed that all (100%) respondents agreed that they had a restroom, a feeding room, a washroom, and a changing room, all of which were included in one room but there were no proper washroom facilities while on duty at arrangements during festivals and rallies. The challenge of long and exhausting hours was reported by majority (83%) of respondents. Furthermore, 85% of respondents felt too much responsibility at work as well as at home. Flexible working hours and reduced workloads will boost employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and allow them to spend more time with their families. The marital status of female police officers is an important element to consider.

Key Words: Women police, facilities, challenges faced, work life balance.

1. INTRODUCTION:

"Public Officer for Legal Investigations and Criminal Emergencies" is what POLICE stands for. The police are a security force that is constantly prepared to protect the people of our country. Their work additionally entails quickly responding to any crisis and dealing with challenging physical situations (**Bansah 2022**). The police oversee both protecting the public from internal immoral behaviour and pursuing all criminal charges. The word for police in Hindi is 'Aarakshi' or 'Aarakshak'. The police, who protect the populace, are the first to respond to any kind of crime. The police use a range of tactics to protect citizens from criminals.

This is an occupation where overtime and steady commitment is required. Some of the duties performed by police staff are to stop criminal activity, apprehend criminals, investigate the criminal's crime, safeguard the country's internal assets, collect evidence in order to prosecute offenders and ensure the ordinary man's safety.

Women play significant roles in all fields. However, the most difficult challenge for women is balancing work and life. Women face conflicting situations as a result of an inner conflict of dual commitment and the practical difficulty of balancing work and household responsibilities. Women in law enforcement also maintain a work-life balance while juggling responsibilities like motherhood, domestic responsibility, and other carer roles. They are exposed to criminals, outcasts, and other socially unacceptable characters because of their line of work. Due to the nature of their employment, police officers frequently report for duty late at night or early in the morning. Their irregular work hours cause additional strain and work-family imbalance, which has an impact on their career. (**Patricia 2016**). The Ministry of Home Affairs established a target of 33% reservation for women in the police force in 2013 and recommended that each police station should have at least three female sub-inspectors and ten female police constables to ensure that women help-desks are always staffed. However, around the world, it has been observed that the appointment of female police officers has aided in situations that male police officers frequently fail to resolve. Female police officers are also seeing an increase in employment because of their performance on the job. (Shivani 2020). Women police are thought to prioritize personal



conflicts, rendering them incompetent and untrustworthy. They are also thought to be too sensitive or weak to work in an environment that requires tremendous physical and mental strain; however, their sensitivity can defuse situations that cannot be resolved through aggression. It is sometimes claimed that hormonal changes and mood swings during menstruation or pregnancy impair women's decision-making abilities. Gender role stereotyping and harassment are common obstacles for women, as males continue to believe that women are not capable of working in an environment that requires aggression and strength. As a result, it was discovered that women are under-represented on the front lines but over-represented in the administrative section of the police organization. (Maheshwari 2018). The present study will help to raise awareness about the professional and personal struggles of female police officers; therefore, there is a need to monitor the issues and challenges that women face at work, as well as the facilities that are provided to them. The study attempts to investigate the various types of challenges faced by female police officers, as well as the facilities at their workplace.

2. METHOD:

Descriptive Research Design was used for this study. The study focused on the facilities provided and challenges faced by the women police staff. In this research, attempts were made to analyze the various dimensions of women police service and its effects such as Organizational aspects, facilities provided, challenges faced, work timing, working environment, family management and job stress. Hence, descriptive design was adopted. The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the experiences of female police officers as well as their ability to balance domestic responsibilities with career advancement. The study was carried out in the Greater Mumbai Region. There are more than 91 police stations in the jurisdiction of Mumbai Police out of which 10 police stations were studied. Convenience sampling technique was used to select the Police women respectively. The sample comprised a total number 60 police women from various police stations of Mumbai and Metropolitan region of Mumbai. Six women police from each police station of Mumbai were included in the study. A survey was conducted to study the facilities provided and challenges faced by the women police staff from the police stations of Greater Mumbai Region (n=60). Kalyan Police Station (n=6), Mahatma Phule Police Station (n=6), Main Police Head Quarter Thane (n=6), Shivaji Park Police Station (n=6), Bandra Police Station (n=6), Santacruz Police Station (n=6), Juhu Police Station (n=6), Borivali Police Station (n=6), Marine Drive Police Station (n=6), Andheri Police Station (n=6). In line with the objectives of the research, a questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire was a research tool that comprised of set of questions or other prompts that aimed to collect information from the respondents regarding the facilities provided and challenges faced by the women police staff.

3. RESULT & DISCUSSION:

In this section an attempt has been made to single out the important findings of the study on women police staff. The findings have been presented using statistical methods and their theoretical implications. The data has been statistically summarized as follows:

Socio-demographic Profile:

The Socio-demographic profile displays the location, age, educational details, name of the workplace, designation, mode of travel, type of job and experience in the respective firm. For the present study, the data was collected using survey method through questionnaire technique among 60 women police which is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Socio-demographic profile of the Women Police Staff

Sr. No.	Parameters	Total Responses (n = 60)		
		Frequency (Percentage)	Mean	SD
1.	Age (In Years)			
	20-30	14 (23%)	20	19.59
	31-40	33 (55%)		
41-50	13 (22%)			
2.	Qualification			
	SSC	2 (2%)	15	16.11
	HSC	12 (22%)		
	Graduate	38 (63%)		
Post-Graduate	8 (13%)			



3.	Marital Status			20	32.53
	Single	7 (12%)			
	Married	53 (88%)			
	Divorced	0 (0%)			
4.	Number of Children			20	18.43
	0	13 (22%)			
	1	25 (42%)			
	2	22 (37%)			
5.	Reason for joining Police			20	11.53
	Government job	24 (40%)			
	Liking	29 (48%)			
	Passion	7 (12%)			
6.	Designation			8.58	10.22
	Police Inspector	2 (3%)			
	Assistant Police Inspector	2 (3%)			
	Police Sub Inspector	12 (20%)			
	Assistant Sub Inspector	1 (2%)			
	Head Constable	8 (13%)			
	Women Police Constable	30 (50%)			
	Women Police Naik	5 (8%)			
7.	Monthly Salary			8.58	7.65
	30-40 K	22 (37%)			
	41-50 K	15 (25%)			
	51-60 K	2 (3%)			
	61-70 K	4 (7%)			
	71-80 K	10 (17%)			
	81-90 K	1 (2%)			
	Prefer not to answer	6 (10%)			
8.	Work Experience			10	7.90
	1-5 years	5 (8%)			
	6-10 years	23 (38%)			
	11-15 years	16 (27%)			
	16-20 years	71 (12%)			
	21-25 years	7 (12%)			
	More than 25 years	2 (3%)			
9.	Duty Timing			30	35.35
	12 hours	55 (92%)			
	More than 12 hours	5 (8%)			
10.	Time taken to reach Workplace			30	35.35
	15 min	12 (20%)			
	30 min	23 (38%)			
	1 hour	18 (30%)			
	More than 1 hour	7 (12%)			
11.	Mode of Travel			15	16.74
	2-Wheeler	19 (32%)			
	Train	37 (62%)			
	Bus	3 (5%)			
	Walk	1 (2%)			

The above table depicts that the maximum number of respondents (55%) were in the age group of 31–40 years. Based on their educational qualification, it can be concluded from the table that the maximum number of respondents were graduates (63%). The data on marital status indicated that the majority (88%) were married. The number of children of the respondent represents the maximum number of respondents 25 (47%) have one child. Respondents were classified



based on their reason for joining the police force. It was found that the majority of respondents (29%) joined the police force because they liked it. Furthermore, 50% of respondents were Women Police Constables (WPC), followed by 20% Police Sub Inspectors (PSI); 13% were Head Constables (HC); 8% were Women Police Naik (WPN), while 3% were Police Inspectors (PI) and Assistant Police Inspectors (API), and 2% were Assistant Sub Inspectors (ASI). With regards to the monthly income, majority of respondents (37%) earned between 30-40 thousand rupees per month. The data on work experience revealed that the majority (38%) of respondents had 6-10 years of experience. With respect to time taken to reach the workplace, 38% of the respondents took 30 minutes to reach their workplace and 62% of the respondents travelled by train to the workplace.

In a study by **Ahmad et al (2012)** the women officers faced several problems due to poor transportation facilities. A proper transport facility was not provided to the female police officer, due to which she faced great difficulties while coming to the police station from far-flung areas and returning to their homes late in the evening. It takes a lot of time for them to reach the workplace.

Duties performed by the Women Police Staff:

The responses on duties performed by the respondents are presented in Fig 1. The variables studied were the different types of duties such as general duties, desk work, crime registration, women help desk, dispatch writing, patrolling, and reporting to the seniors.

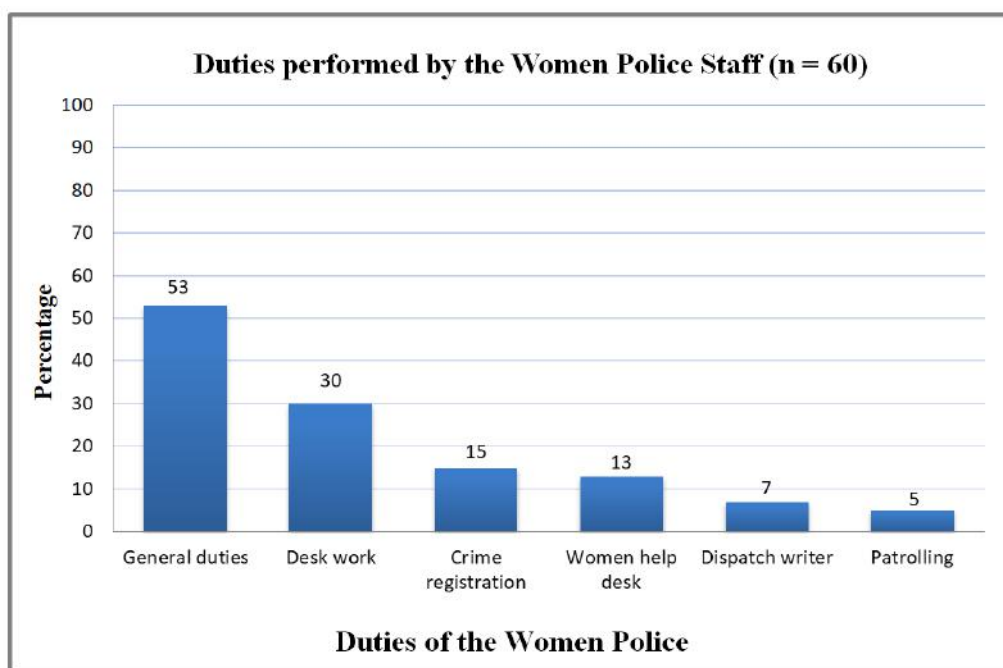


Figure 1: Duties performed by the Women Police Staff

The above figure indicates that 53% of respondents performed general duties and desk work duties. In a study by **Shivani (2020)** it was reported that policing is male-dominated, where women have to go extra miles to get respect. In this organization, women are generally not given any main police duties and are typically delegated to desk jobs and general duties which shield them from frontline policing works.

Facilities provided at the police station to the women police staff.

Workplace facilities available to female police officers are presented in Fig 2. The facilities provided include restroom, feeding room, changing room, washroom, crèche, internet facilities computer/laptop, sanitary pad vending machine and so on.

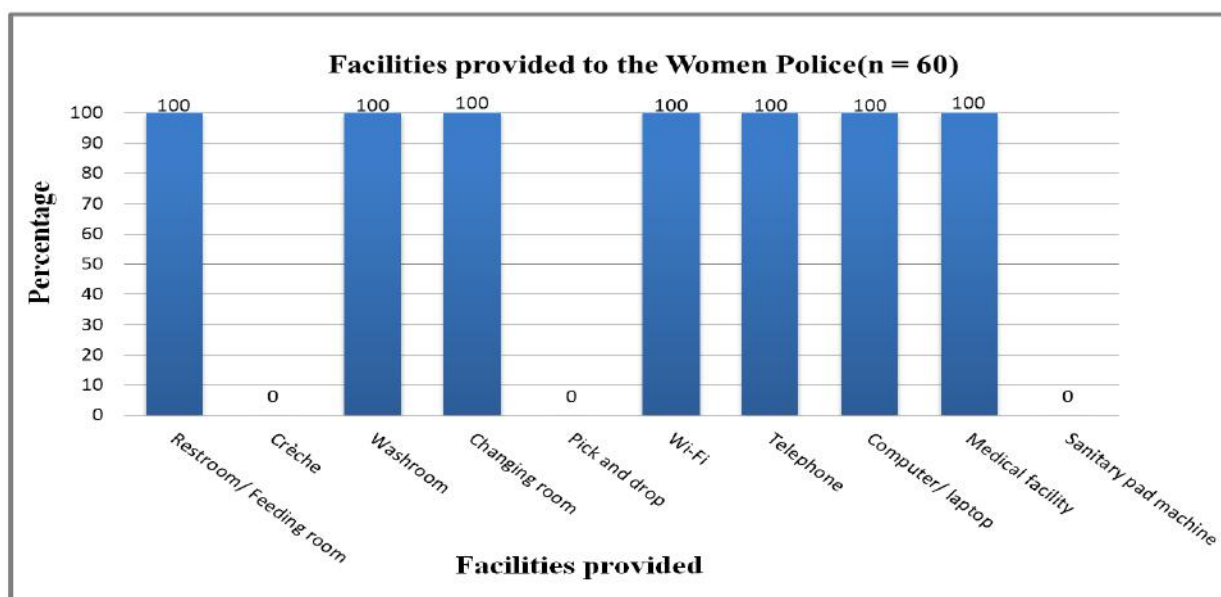


Figure 2. Facilities provided at the police station to the women police staff

It can be seen from the above figure that with respect to facilities provided at the police station for women police staff, all (100%) respondents agreed that they had a restroom, a feeding room, a washroom, and a changing room, all of which are included in one room. 100% of the respondents said that their workplace included all the technological facilities such as Wi-Fi, telephones, and computers or laptops. 100% of respondents agree that they were being provided with medical facilities in an emergency. 80% of respondents said that there were sufficient toilets (separate toilets for male and female staff) in the police stations. All the respondents (100%) said that they feel they are working in a safe workplace. But all the respondents reported that there were no sanitary pad vending machines available in the toilets of the police stations. Additionally, there was no pick-up and drop-off facility available for the police staff, even in emergencies. Also, the police women reported that there were no proper washroom facilities while on duty at arrangements during festivals and rallies.

Similarly, in a study by **Jamil (2015)**, stated that there was no facility for washrooms for the policewoman, and because of this, while on duty, the women cops went on long spells without water to avoid urination. It was also hard for them to find a proper place for urination.

Challenges and problems faced by women police staff.

The challenges and problems faced by the respondents are presented in **Table 2 and Table 3**.

Table 2: Challenges faced by Women Police Staff

Sr. No	Parameters	Total Responses (n = 60)			Mean	SD
		Frequency (Percentage)				
		Yes	No	Sometimes		
1.	Long and exhausting work hours	52 (87%)	2 (3%)	6 (10%)	20	27.79
2.	Tough duties	46 (77%)	3 (5%)	11 (18%)	20	22.87
3.	Lower strength than male staff	16 (27%)	31 (52%)	13 (21%)	20	9.64
4.	Get appreciation for good work	51 (85%)	4 (7%)	5 (8%)	20	26.86
5.	Tight and heavy body protection vests	1 (2%)	46 (76%)	13 (22%)	20	23.30
6.	Boredom and monotony of work	47 (78%)	5 (9%)	8 (13%)	20	23.43
7.	Excessive tension and challenges	47 (78%)	4 (7%)	9 (15%)	20	23.43
8.	Too much responsibility of workplace and home	51 (85%)	5 (8%)	4 (7%)	20	26.85

The above table indicates that the challenge of long and exhausting hours was reported by the majority (87%) of respondents. With respect to the challenge of tough duties 77% agreed whereas 52% respondents reported that they did



not agree they had lower strength as compared to their male counterparts. The results for the appreciation of good work showed that a maximum (85%) respondents felt they get appreciated for good work. The data on boredom and monotonous work revealed that 78% of respondents felt excessive tension at work and boredom and monotony at work as they had to perform only delegated duties. It was also seen in the table that 85% respondents felt too much responsibility at work as well as at home. In a study by **Jayasathya & K. Swathi (2019)** on the problems and challenges experienced by female police constables in Coimbatore identified suspicion by society and family members, family members disagreeing to work at night, insufficient time to look after family affairs, lack of support from family members, no time for retirement, no time to participate in social and religious functions, no time for personal grooming, excessive tensions and challenges, health related problems, and too much responsibility were some of the challenges experienced by female police constables.

Table 3: Problems faced by Women Police Staff

Sr. No	Parameters	Total Responses (n = 60)				Mean	SD
		Frequency (Percentage)					
		Yes	No	Sometimes			
1.	Harassment	2 (3%)	57 (95%)	1 (2%)	20	32.04	
2.	Working at odd hours	56 (93%)	2 (4%)	2 (3%)	20	31.17	
3.	Holidays	3 (5%)	57 (95%)	0 (0%)	20	32.07	
4.	Lack of cooperation from colleagues	3 (5%)	46 (77%)	11 (18%)	20	22.86	
5.	Non acceptance by public and family members	3 (5%)	53 (88%)	4 (7%)	20	28.58	
6.	Disturbed social life of the women police	60 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0	0	
7.	Low promotion ratio	37 (62%)	19 (32%)	4 (6%)	20	16.52	
8.	Health related problems	22 (37%)	22 (37%)	16 (26%)	20	3.46	
9.	Have help at home	11 (18%)	49 (82%)	0 (0%)	20	25.70	

It can be seen from the above table that 95% respondents reported that they never faced harassment at their workplace but never get holidays when they ask for a holiday because of the nature of their work. Further, 93% women police officers reported that had to work at odd hours in early morning and late nights. In a study by Vanessa Michelle Brodeur (2018) on female police officers stated that female officers faced more incidents of harassment than male officers, and these incidents had a negative impact on their mental and physical health, retention, and job satisfaction. Similar findings were reported in a study by Kakati (2019) on Women in Police Service which stated that most of them (73.33%) expressed their dissatisfaction regarding leave facilities. Those who were dissatisfied said that it was very difficult to get leave in the police service. Their leave was not sanctioned by the supervisors. In police, most of the time, their leave permission is withheld at the time of any festival or any special occasion. The present study also reported that 77% of respondents said that they get cooperation from male colleagues. All respondents agreed that the nature of their profession had a significant impact on their social life as they were not able to attend family gatherings or functions due to their tight and busy schedules. 62% respondents felt there was a low promotion ratio as police personnel got promoted only after 10 years. 100% of respondents agreed that they were not given incentive for extra work. Also, 82% have no helping hand at home. The data collected on health-related problems showed that 37% of respondents had health-related problems like high and low blood pressure, diabetes, menstrual problems like PCOD. Many respondents further explained the issues of carrying out their duties without taking break during menstruation and no fixed place for urination during outdoor duties which led to various health problems for the police women. Similar findings were reported in a study by **Rizvi (2015)** which enumerated various aspects of disturbed social life because of the nature of policing duties which required police women to work at odd hours, such as late at night or early in the morning. Policing required 24-hour coverage with no set holidays or work schedule. This made juggling family obligations and police work difficult. **Joshi (2015)** in a study on police life stated that due to the nature of their profession, female police officers found it difficult to participate in their social lives. Police job had a significant impact on a person's social life. In a study by **Surafel Melsew (2019)** stated that promotion related problems were the most faced challenge affecting career growth of police officers; therefore, Policing should be given an equal chance at career promotion.



4. CONCLUSION:

The women police deal with several issues while balancing work and family life. Overall, the study determined the major challenges and problems faced by the female police officers. Various factors were identified that included, duties and responsibilities of the police women, infrastructure and working conditions, challenges and problems faced. The women Police faced several problems due to inadequate transportation facilities, which posed difficulties while coming to the police station from distant places and returning to their homes late after duty. Women were frequently assigned to desk jobs and other general duties which prevented them from frontline policing works. The study revealed that women police skip drinking water for long hours to avoid urination at the time of arrangements during festivals and rallies as there are no proper sanitation facilities. The female police also drew attention to departmental problems concerning medical care, pick-up and drop-off facility, lengthy and exhausting workdays, inconsistent duty shifts. The study also highlighted that the women police do not even get the necessary and sufficient leaves. It is therefore evident that Police Women should be given all jobs as their male counterparts, since they can accomplish all the duties. The Women Police should be provided with amenities such as, the allocation of an adequate budget to meet the transportation (pick-up and drop-off) and infrastructure (washrooms, sanitary facilities) needs. Flexible working hours and reduced workloads will boost employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and allow them to spend more time with their families. The marital status of female police officers is an important element to consider. Job rotation will assist women police in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Motivational speeches from higher commanders could be useful to maintain a healthy work-life balance. There should be medical health check-up camps set up for police women because they are unlikely to go to their own check-ups. A sanitary pad vending machine should be put in each police station so that police women can use it in an emergency. When women police officers work outside during arrangements, suitable sanitary facilities should be provided such as standard portable toilets, luxury portable restrooms, mobile toilets to avoid a variety of health risks.

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