

## **Brief Report on the Issues Faced by Women Police in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP)**

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Women police own their existence to the Women's Political & Social Union of Great Britain when WPSU agreed to the decision to give full support to the British war effort during the First World War by founding the women police volunteers in September 1914 that was renamed as Women Police Service in 1915.

The British government had always opposed the idea of women police but with large number of policemen joining the Army, it was considered a good idea to have women volunteers to help run the service who were willing to work without pay. By 1918 there were 357 members of the WPS. During the same year Margaret Damer Dawson, the Commandant and Allen, the Sub-Commandant of WPS asked the Chief Commissioner, Sir Nevil Macready, to make them a permanent part of his force. He refused, saying that the women were "too educated" and would "irritate" male members of the force. Macready instead decided to recruit and train his own women force. However, both Dawson and Allen were awarded the OBE for services to their country during wartime.

In contrast to the above, the initial record of the women police in Pakistan is not traceable at the moment, as there is no published document on the subject. However, I found that the women police in the NWFP were recruited for the first time in 1954 since Pakistan's independence in 1947. There is also no specific role description for women police in any regular published police documents. However, in Pakistan the functions of the women police include:

- To locate and search women offenders
- To guard and escort women prisoners to courts and then to respective jails
- To regulate women crowds at places of entertainment, markets, and public functions
- To assist male police in handling women in the processions
- To assist male investigation officers to interrogate women offenders, or examine women victims and witnesses
- To help the male officers in investigating theft committed by the female servants
- To deal with scuffles amongst women
- To take up the cases of abandoned women and children and transfer them to the designated shelters

- To help/assist other officers in dealing with reported cases of violence against women
- To rescue and rehabilitate needy women.

The report of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus based upon their visit to the Women Police Station in Islamabad Capital Territory during 2008 made a number of observations in this regard. The role and functions of women police from the above list seem to be auxiliary, subsidiary and secondary to the role of male police officers. This lack of primary position for women police has given rise to many problems for them. In order to ascertain the problems being faced by female police of the NWFP and to see how closely they relate to the observations of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus an exercise was undertaken with the women police from Mardan, Swabi and Peshawar.

## Methodology

Due to shortage of time and resources the researcher used Nominal Group Technique to ascertain the problems being faced by the women police that participated in the exercise. This technique was originally developed by Delbecq and VandeVen, and is a decision making method for use amongst groups of many sizes, who want to make their decision quickly, as by a vote, and need everyone's opinions taken into account (as opposed to traditional voting, where only the largest group is considered). The method of tallying is the difference. First, every member of the group gives their view to the solution, with a short explanation. Then, duplicate solutions are eliminated from the list of all solutions, and the members proceed to rank the solutions, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on. The numbers each solution receives are totaled, and the solution with the lowest (i.e. most favoured) total ranking is selected as the final decision. There are variations on how this technique is used. For example, it can identify strengths versus areas in need of development, rather than be used as a decision-making voting alternative. Also, options do not always have to be ranked, but may be evaluated more subjectively.

## Presentation of Activity

As a starter the Women police were asked to give answers to the following questions on 3x4 inches cards without putting their names or identities. Their replies were as following:

1. Are you satisfied with your job?

District	% age Satisfied
Swabi	88.9%
Mardan	100%
Peshawar	78.9%

## 2. Given a Chance will you again Join Police?

District	% age Who Would Join
Swabi	88.9%
Mardan	47.9%
Peshawar	38.9%

## 3. Will you advise other females of your family to join police?

District	% age we will Advise
Swabi	100%
Mardan	44%
Peshawar	53%

## 4. How Are You Treated by Your Family Members?

District	% age Treated Well
Swabi	100%
Mardan	95.7%
Peshawar	87%

When the participants were probed as to the discrepancy between the answer to question number one and question numbers 2 and 3 the saying of Mrs. **Creighton, Voluntary Patrol Committee at the Annual General Meeting (1917) was proved true i.e.** “The policewoman of the future will be taken from that class of women who are forced to earn their living by it, and not so much from the educated women who now take smaller or no pay for the sake of helping.” They elaborated that this was the only source of earning and that they had no other opportunities and despite the so many odds they are forced to continue with this job.

The other issues being faced by them in descending level of priorities are:

1. The lack of transport whereby they had to take public transport to the duty stations and back. In the wake of the war against terror and the fact that police have become one of the primary targets and which to them is more of a security concern than an issue of convenience. This is further aggravated by the fact that they are not allowed to come to the police lines in civilian dress.
2. The lack of civic facilities while guarding gates of offices and other public places. The participants elaborated that there were no toilet facilities for them while they perform guard duties. In order to attend to a call of nature they have

to go to nearby houses but before that they have to get permission from the senior male police officers who mostly do not permit them till the arrival of the replacement. They also complained that they had to arrange for their own food while on duty.

3. Lack of promotion coupled with lack of proper training is an issue that has a very demoralizing effect on the women police. The participants elaborated that a master degree holder and a hardly qualified for recruitment women police serve on the same grade. They are taken along while raiding residences in search of out laws. In doing so they are always kept in the front, however, they are neither provided with the appropriate gear nor the required training. They are also not issued any weapons. In case an incident of firing and killing occur during the raid they have the responsibility to guard inside of the premises till the formalities are completed which at times might take around 24 hours. Similarly while checking vehicles they are also on the fore front. They also complained that due to cultural reasons they can not take advantage of the trainings that are available at Hangu, therefore, trainings should be arranged that are accessible from their duty stations of women police.
4. Very closely ranked to the above is the lack of respect for the women police. They complained the lack of the due respect by the male police and the fact that they are sent to serve at the residences of the higher officials. Similarly when they try to complain they are reminded that if they are to survive they have to perform duties in addition to their job description. They also complained that they are provided with inferior quality of uniforms while the chaddar (veil) is not a part of it but still they are forced to observe full purdah by wearing a chaddar.
5. Lack of decent accommodation or absence of a proper hostel whereby they are forced to live in substandard accommodation in the police lines, whereby after duty they have to clean, cook and perform other chores unlike the male police of similar ranks.
6. The lactating and married women are made to perform similar duties as their counterparts from amongst the unmarried female police as well as the male police. They further elaborated that this on the one hand has a negative effect on their children while on the other it also negatively affects their marital lives.
7. Empowerment of female police which can be achieved by establishing women police stations in public places so that they can actually serve the women. In addition women cells need to be established in every police station.

Through the above I reconfirm the observations of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus i.e.

- Poor Budgetary Allocation
- Staff and Responsibilities

- Lack of Infra structural facilities
- Low and negligible reporting of crimes in Women Police Stations
- Supplementary work
- Lack of autonomy
- Poor recruitment of women in police
- Inadequate capacity to deal with harassment or violence against women cases

In addition to the above this study throws a brief light on the poor working conditions, violation of the human rights of women police and their training needs which need to be taken seriously if they are to perform their duties to provide protection to half of the country population. In this regards a further in-depth study is recommended to further analyze this issue and suggest concrete recommendations.

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