

Breaking Barriers: Women Officers and the Impact of Patriarchal Institutional Practices in the Police Service of Pakistan.

Dr. Latafat Aziz

Assistant Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, Bahria University Islamabad Campus
Latafat.soc@gmail.com

Fatima Jabeen

MS Scholar, Bahria University Islamabad Campus

Dr. Asim Muneeb Khan

Assistant Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, Bahria University Islamabad Campus

Abstract

In Pakistan, women police officers are stuck between cultural standards and their duty as police officials. Police department is still a male dominant organization that requires manly image. Male law enforcement officers have yet to recognize women as equals. One group among Central Superior Services is the 'Police Services Group of Pakistan' (PSP). It is one of the oldest groups of civil services of Pakistan and almost all the senior police officers belong to this group. Initially males used to join this group only but since last decade, females are also joining this group. The present study is conducted for better understanding and to explore the lived experiences of women police officers in Police Service of Pakistan. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to conduct In-depth Interviews from Women Police Officers posted at Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Twelve (12) women PSP officers were interviewed for the research purpose. The study intended to unfold the patriarchal institutional practices in this regard. Furthermore, how women PSP officers experience patriarchal institutional practices and what challenges they face during their service journey. The research findings indicated that majority of women police officers had joined the force willingly and many respondents agree that patriarchal norms do affect their lives. The major problems faced by them were gender discrimination and sudden calls for the night shift duties. Different harassment incidents were also reported by the Women Police officers. Feminist Standpoint theory has been used as a theoretical framework to explain the results and findings of the study. The theory states that lived experiences of women becomes sites of epistemic knowledge and research based on women's lives generate knowledge for the whole social order including men.

Keywords: Women PSP officer, Patriarchy, Social Institution, Lived Experiences & Challenges.

1. Introduction

In nineteenth century, the development of professional policing was an important social innovation, but the inclusion of women in this profession was almost invisible. Early decade of twentieth century

depicts the appointment of women police personnel in police department. In 1908, first female police was appointed in Portland Oregon, in 1910 in Los Angeles, in 1913 in Toronto (Brown & Heidensohn, 2000). Initially women police officers were restricted to small in number and were assigned assistive roles with their male colleagues. During the second half of the twentieth century, there was a shift as women police officers entered juvenile aid units, patrol teams and traffic squads (Heidensohn, 2001). Pakistani society has well-established patriarchal norms and values for the individuals. The equal contribution of men and women in the advancement of any community is what defines its prosperity. Both are social cornerstones. It is extremely impossible for a country to advance without equal involvement of both sexes in the development process. Women's status in Pakistan is inconsistent. It varies according to class, rural-urban environment, and career. Restriction of resources eventually results in the deficiency of education and health facilities. *Purdah*, women's limited mobility, and honour connected with women's sexuality are some of the stated factors that limit women's access to health and education, as well as their confidence in attaining their goals in life. (Asian Development Bank, 2000).

Working in a police department is seen to demand significant strength and might to deal with criminals, which is why this career is thought to be masculine. However, as time passed, societal progress and urbanization has changed people's attitudes, and they began to accept women police officers in departments. Both the society and the family believe that the existence of women in police departments can create calmer environment for female petitioners and better results when dealing with female convicts. Women's inclusion in this department aids in the control of crimes perpetrated by women. Police women throughout the world are executing their tasks just as well as their counterparts. Their active participation in the department has not only assisted the police in carrying out their duties, but it has also aided in the reduction of crimes perpetrated by and against children & women (Schultz, 1995).

Although female involvement has grown in various areas, the public still does not appreciate their efforts in law enforcement. Women were scarcely acknowledged as members of the public society. Gender discrimination in law enforcement produces a hostile working atmosphere and discourages women from joining. However, the hard work and devotion of women in law implementation may make it an authorising and satisfying job (Brown, 2000).

Males domination in the police department, portrays the idea that males are more strong and powerful than females, and that it is their excessive force that is necessary to operate this agency effectively.

Mostly women are discouraged to join the police force, and if they join, they have little opportunity of advancement and success. It is not simply a man's power or strength that allows him to cope with the people around him; there are several more strategies he may employ to shape the situation, regardless of gender, in his favour, resulting in gender inequality. The community is frequently given the appearance of shortage rather than safety. So, not only may males use their authority to administer the department, but women are also capable to work with dedication and serve the community with their hard work and commitment. They can do it considerably better since females have outperformed males in many other areas (Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2009).

Female police officers are not mostly discouraged by their male counterparts, but also face a variety of other issues. They must provide for their families. They make every effort to ensure that their families do not suffer as a result of their work. They assume full responsibility for their family (Matin, 1996). Women must compete for positions in the police force that they are qualified for. They are sometimes denied their privileges, and male officers are favoured for certain posts. They must struggle for their self-esteem and a legitimate place in society (Carol, 1996). Sexual harassment is also a common issue that women police officers confront when working in a police station. They suffer from such settings, which drives them to seek harsher conditions. They are uneasy because they are not offered sentiments of security and protection by society or male co-workers. They are likewise afraid of reporting abuse (Sousa, 2008).

Role of women cannot be denied in any field. Since British times entry of females in police force is not as prominent (Baba Khel, 2015). In Pakistan there was a prominent change in 1994 when Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (Late) laid the foundation of first women police station in Rawalpindi (Prenzler & Sinclair 2013). Slowly and gradually, a visible change has been noticed and now we see women entry as an Officer in the Police Department. According to research, women police officers are more active and successful than their male colleagues in dealing with family issues, and they demonstrate more affection, tolerance, care, and understanding in these situations (Bell 1982). Women of “conservative” Balochistan have little space in the political, cultural, economic, or social fields. Conditions are even worse for Balochistan’s women in rural areas. Surviving all these hurdles, Pari Gul Tareen has been posted as Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Quetta Cantt. She is the first woman in the history of the Pakistan to be appointed to this post. She hails from the Pishin area of Balochistan and is the first woman in the province to join the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP) after passing the Central Superior Services (CSS) exam. Tareen is, however, not the only one to have made

the country proud in these changing times.

2. Statement of the Problem

Central Superior Service (CSS) is the competitive exam in Pakistan conducted by Federal Public Service Commission, Government of Pakistan. The successful candidates opt for a group from given twelve options. Now a large number of females also join police service of Pakistan. This study revolves around women PSP officers focusing upon patriarchal institutional practices and the challenges faced by them during their career. We can find a lot of research conducted about male PSP officers (Fasihuddin, 2007; Asad, 2009) but the uniqueness of my study will reveal the standpoint of women PSP officers. Internationally some researches have been conducted on women PSP officers but in Pakistan, it is a grey area (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013).

3. Significance of the Study

The role of females cannot be ignored in the progress of any field. Females are the backbone of the modern society. This study aims to explore the emergence of women PSP group and its development. Along with this, the study looks into the challenges and hardships they encounter during their career and how they work hard to maintain the balance between their family life and work field.

This work will be a piece of motivation for the females of upcoming generations and will open more doors for researchers to explore the achievements of females especially in the fields, which are generally thought to be males' part only. The study will also help to highlight and understand the challenges and problems faced by women police officers and will suggest strategies to cope with them.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the patriarchal institutional practices in PSP.
2. To explore the lived experiences of Women PSP Officers in Pakistan.
3. To reveal the struggle and Challenges of Women PSP Officers.

5. Research Questions

1. What are the patriarchal institutional practices in PSP?
2. How patriarchal institutional patterns are experienced by Women PSP Officers in Pakistan?
3. How do Women PSP Officers cope up with gender discrimination (any sort of) during their

service?

4. What are the challenges and struggles of Women PSP officers in Pakistan?

6. Literature Review

Female discrimination was practice in police for several years, described Skerlj & Virjent (2009). As women were considered weak and powerless, so they were considered misfit for the force. With the passage of time, the Slovenian of police has 613 woman police officers. The study struggled to discovery whether females have been provided equivalent opportunities and equal stage to prove their capabilities in contrast with their male colleagues. The study intended to find if the females were accepted equally at their working environment. The research had two parts first part discussed the history of female employment in police, their educational process and gender related challenges face by them. The second part described the analytical aspect of these problems and the treatment they get. Several women officer interviewed and the survey deals with the behaviour of people with the women in uniform. It also look at the amount of support from their families and colleagues. The study also looked upon the reason why women join police force. It concluded that female officers seems to be satisfied with their positions and environment.

In view of their superior goal-setting and managerial abilities compared to male police officers, Gavin and Metcalfe (2007) investigated the sluggish encouragement & promotion of women police officers. Two surveys about the advancement of female & male officers who manage tenure and their organisational commitment were conducted in the police departments of two different countries in the UK. The results indicate that while male officers obtained more promotions, women police officers perform better overall. Police department was recommended to reassess its employment procedures and management guidelines for the benefit of the organization.

Collins (2008) examined the degree of job satisfaction social workers feel in connection to gender equality, healthy and unhealthy coping methods, and the importance of support within the workplace. Numerous researches have been done on job stress. This study looks at how unhappy the employees are at work, why they miss work, and other physical, social, and behavioural signs of stress. According to Horne (2006), since the police were established in the United States in the middle of the 19th century, they have been seen as a male-dominated institution. In the group, men predominate, and this trend will continue in the forthcoming. The organisations employ between 13 and 14 percent of women, a feat that the women who established this milestone only managed to do after overcoming numerous obstacles. The organisations employ between 13 and 14 percent of women, a feat that the women who

established this milestone only managed to do after overcoming numerous obstacles.

Pattanaik and Worley (2011) viewed women as being an essential component of society. For India's pride and dignity, women have traditionally played insignificant roles. In 1972, Kiran Bede became the first one to work for the Indian Police Service. Women have long contributed much to the advancement of civilization, but they are still viewed as inferior to males. The study compares the experiences of women police officers in Delhi and Orissa. It investigates their level of adjustments at the workplace and their job expectations. The researcher observed that as compared to Delhi, women of Orissa adjust more quickly and easily. Urban life style and nuclear family structure of Delhi was observed as hurdle for the women polices officers.

Lip (2009) work on various stress factors affecting Bazillion police officers. Four hundred and eighteen senior police officers were evaluated through quantitative questionnaire. The study evaluated the life styles and factors that might affect their life. Data found that 54% female officers and 40% male officers were facing stress issues. Over all 43% of high-ranking police, officers were having symptoms of anxiety. The study suggested that the branch should implement some defensive measure for the betterment of the police officers.

According to Bhagata (2003), in professional science, work, organization, and professional-related variables all contribute to stress. Alma (2006) addressed the various forms of stress that, in various organisations, particularly the police play a significant role in non-satisfactory performance and distraction from objectives. Fifty police officers were questioned using the M.S. version of the Bell Adjustment Inventory scale and the occupational stress index scale. Police officers in India experience stress due to their ambiguous roles, emotions, societal adjustments, and security. This stress is correlated with changes in family life.

Pakistan is a developing country and women in Pakistan are in a continuous struggle for their rights and position. In police department, the same struggle can be observed. Women police officers are also in a continuous struggle to get higher ranks and to prove themselves professionally. Women police are stuck in between the cultural norms and their professional responsibilities. Fasihuddin (2007), in his study highlights the issues faced by police in Balochistan. The study showed that few joined police force willingly whereas most them were compelled by an urge to meet the financial family needs. The major issue faced by them was the grant of emergency leave and sudden night calls. Some also reported sexual harassment in various forms.

Farid (2016) conducted a study on experiences of women police at work place and come up with the

results that females working in police department have few chances of promotion as compared to their colleagues. Most police stations lack facilities for the female staff and mostly females are assigned low-level duties as they are considered weak for the policing tasks.

7. Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature. Semi-Structured in-depth interviews were conducted from twelve women police officers to know about patriarchal institutional practices and their lived experiences. The qualitative research technique is defined as "the methodological pursuit of understanding individuals' views, approaches, and experiences about their surroundings and making meaning of their experiences" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p.4). The population of the current study comprised of women police officers of different age groups who have passed the competitive exam and joined police force as Women Police Officer. Initially a socio-economic survey form was used to collect the background information of the respondents. Then semi-structured interview guide comprising thirty-four questions was used to collect the data. The data was collected until reaching the point of saturation.

8. Results and Discussions

In our society, there are different degrees for working women, which are influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors. Overall Pakistan is a patriarchal society and here traditional gender roles are implemented. The study shows that few women have the permission and ability to make the decision independently whereas the majority face many limitations and challenges

A gradual shift has been observed in urban areas and highly educated professional women that they have decision-making power. Women pursue higher education and join the workforce which makes them able for financially independent and gives them courage for decision-making. Such women have more control over their personal choices such as career development marriage, family planning, etc. Still, cultural expectations and traditional gender norms limit independent women, particularly in marriage decisions, financial control, and family matters. The data collected gives a view that not all men hold patriarchal views. There are several families to support women's decision-making rights.

Overall, the patriarchal character of Pakistani society can make women's freedom and decision-making difficult. It is hardly a generalization to say that all working women lack independent decision powers. The degree of independence and decision-making capacity varies between locations, socioeconomic classes, educational levels, and personal situations.

Females are well qualified for police work. There has been substantial growth in the number of women entering law enforcement organizations across the world in recent years, and several nations actively

promote the participation of women in their police forces. Policing is a broad job that necessitates a wide range of talents and abilities, and women have proved to be very talented and effective in this industry.

Female police officers offer distinct views and abilities to the work. They frequently thrive in community policing, developing connections with various groups, and dealing with difficult situations with sensitivity and compassion. Women can help to build a more balanced and inclusive police force that is more effective in serving and protecting the community.

It is important to highlight that gender should not be a hindrance to determining an individual's eligibility for any career, including the police. The credentials, abilities, competence, and passion for public service should be the fundamental factors for selecting and promoting police personnel. Women may flourish and make meaningful contributions as police officers if they satisfy the appropriate qualifications and pass the same rigorous training and selection processes as their male counterparts.

Women police officers have played an important role in society and the police department, but some issues need to be addressed for progress. Some respondents stated that the reputation of women police officers might be enhanced by displaying a favourable picture of the police department through media and social gatherings so that the general public is aware of the benefits of women cops in crime control. Because of the favourable image of women police officers, the general population will not only accept but even join this force. Similarly, the goal of equal opportunity will be met for women in the police force.

Several women's police officers have stated that the women's police should be trained with the most up-to-date weaponry and devices to carry out their tasks in the current day. The government also intended that the strength of female trainers be equal to that of male trainers. Some participants stated that the government is also essential to offer contemporary and cutting-edge facilities to female police officers for them to combat criminals. The ASP of Rawalpindi police station wished to empower women police officers by granting them authority and power without political influence. The ASP of Rawalpindi further said that IT and professional training may be provided on an urgent basis to ensure adequate documentation of crime scenes, among other things. One of the respondents wished for the possibility of entering any other civic or military service.

Women police officers in the Twin Cities have disclosed that they are having challenges with the police department, their families, and the public. Women police officers revealed that juggling personal and professional commitments is extremely tough. Aside from that, the general public does not accept

women in the police department since they realize that police jobs are exclusively performed by men. The female cops also raised concerns about departmental issues such as medical, pick-up and drop-off, lengthy and tiring work hours, incompatible duty shifts, a lack of authority, and a lack of employees. Similarly, there is a broad list of problems that women police officers confront both inside and outside of the agency. The female cops were fed up with the unfavourable reactions, harsh comments, and ridiculing attitudes of family members, the general public, and co-workers.

The women police offered certain ways for future improvement to bring the women police in the twin cities up to worldwide standards. Women police officers must be given authority, sufficient training, and current equipment. The women cops also wanted equal opportunities for everyone and for the police department's favourable image to be promoted through social gatherings, media, and any other feasible platform.

9. Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to explain the orientation, structure and functioning of Police Service of Pakistan and to explore the standpoint (lived experiences, struggles, challenges, and family vs. work life etc.) of Women PSP Officers in Pakistan. In conclusion, a variety of elements, such as inspiration, the capacity for independent judgment, answers to allegations of bribery, contentment with working hours, duty timings, and the difficulties experienced by unmarried respondents while on duty, influence the experiences of women police officers. Similar to the study conducted by Schultz, 1995, the current study also finds that women in law enforcement are motivated to succeed in their careers by their own goals, the accomplishments of their female colleagues, and the need to challenge gender conventions. The prospect of dismantling obstacles and clearing a path for future generations inspires their tenacity. For female police officers to demonstrate their autonomy and overcome obstacles, they must be able to make choices on their own. Making decisions about their professional lives, work environments, and home lives gives individuals the power to create their own professional identities.

The findings of the study back up several previous studies, including (Guzman, M. C., & Frank, J. (2004), Dick, P., & Nadin, S. (2006), Prenzler, T., Fleming, J., & King, A. L. (2010) cited in the literature review. Female police officers confront gender prejudices and cultural attitudes that can damage their credibility and integrity, making bribery a serious difficulty for them. To promote integrity and accountability within the police force, combating bribery necessitates a multifaceted strategy that includes supporting organizational structures, training programs, and partnerships with anti-corruption organizations. The general well-being and work-life balance of female police officers

depend on their satisfaction with their working hours. Higher job satisfaction is a result of putting supporting policies into place, providing flexible work schedules, and developing an inclusive workplace that takes into account employees' various requirements.

For female police officers, shift rotations and erratic schedules provide special difficulties. These difficulties can be overcome by distributing shifts fairly, giving appropriate advance notice of changes, and making accommodations for rest and recuperation, eventually enhancing their physical and emotional well-being. Unmarried respondents among female police officers confront particular issues such as gender prejudices, a lack of support networks, safety concerns, difficulties with work and family obligations, and misunderstanding. These issues may be successfully solved by developing a welcoming and encouraging workplace that respects diversity, actively confronts preconceptions, and offers tools and support networks.

In conclusion, we can help create a more fair, supportive, and inclusive law enforcement environment by understanding and addressing these varied facets of the experiences of women police officers. In addition to the officers themselves, empowering women in law enforcement improves the overall efficacy and reliability of law enforcement organizations.

References:

- Alam, S. (2006). Influence of Occupational Stress on Adjustment: A Study of Police Personnel. *The Indian Police Journal*, 1, 50-61.
- Brown, J., & Heidensohn, F. (2000). *Gender and policing: Comparative perspectives* (p. 14). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Bari, F. (2000). *Women in Pakistan: Country briefing paper*. Asian Development Bank.
- Bell, D. J. (2002). Policewomen: Myths and reality. *Journal of Police Science & Administration*.
- Babakhel, A. M. (2015). Dwindling prestige of the CSS. *The Express Tribune*.
- Bhagat, R. S. (2003). Effects of stressful life events on individual performance effectiveness and work adjustment processes within organizational settings: A research model. *Academy of Management Review*, 8(4), 660-671.
- Brown, B., & Reed Benedict, W. (2002). Perceptions of the police: Past findings, methodological issues, conceptual issues and policy implications. *Policing: an international journal of police strategies & management*, 25(3), 543-580.
- Brown, J. (2000). Discriminatory experiences of women police. A comparison of officers serving in England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. *International*

- Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 28(2), 91-111.
- Collins, S. (2008). Statutory social workers: Stress, job satisfaction, coping, social support and individual differences. *British journal of social work*, 38(6), 1173-1193.
- Farid, N., Ali, R., & Ashfaq, A. (2016). Experiences of women police at work place in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, 8(3), 149.
- Fasihuddin, S. (2012). Police education and training in Pakistan. *Archivos de Criminología, Seguridad Privada y Criminalística*, (9), 9-10.
- Dick, G., & Metcalfe, B. (2007). The progress of female police officers? An empirical analysis of organisational commitment and tenure explanations in two UK police forces. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 20(2), 81-100.
- Horne, P. (2006). Policewomen: Their first century and the new era. *Police Chief*, 73(9), 56.
- Lipp, M. E. N. (2009). Stress and quality of life of senior Brazilian police officers. *The Spanish journal of psychology*, 12(2), 593-603.
- Martin, C. (1996). The impact of equal opportunities policies on the day-to-day experiences of women police constables. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(4), 510-528.
- Morash, M., Haarr, R., & Kwak, D. H. (2006). Multilevel influences on police stress. *Journal of contemporary criminal justice*, 22(1), 26-43.
- Pattanaik, J. K., Worley, V. B., De Guzman, M., Das, A., & Das, D. (2011, April). Job expectation, adjustment, and coping mechanisms among women in two police forces in India. In *International Police Executive Symposium*.
- Prenzler, T., & Sinclair, G. (2013). The status of women police officers: An international review. *International journal of law, crime and justice*, 41(2), 115-131.
- Schultz, T. P. (Ed.). (1995). *Investment in women's human capital*. University of Chicago Press.
- Skerlj, and B. Virjent. (2009). Policewomen as a profession.
- Sousa, W., & Gauthier, J. F. (2008). Gender diversity in officers' evaluations of police work: A survey of job satisfaction in the police workplace. *Justice Policy Journal*, 5(1), 58-62.